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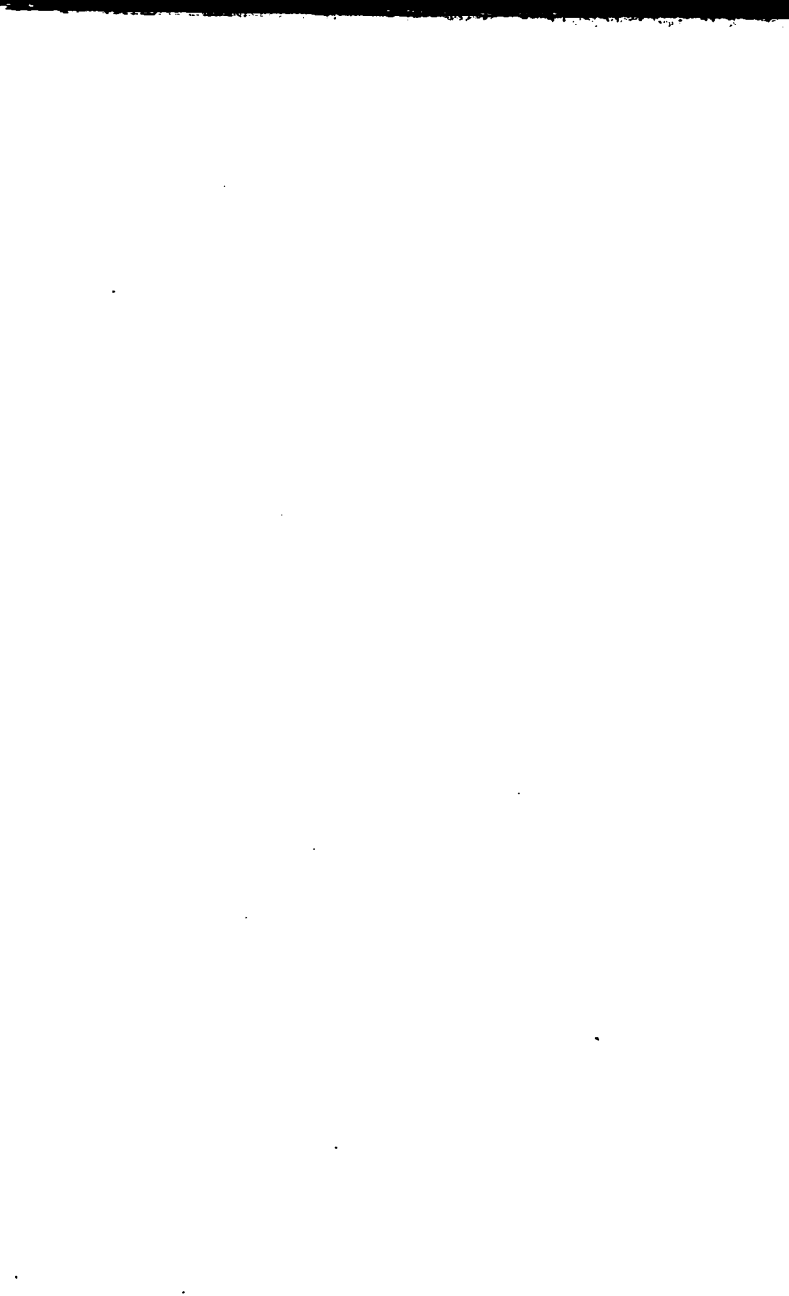
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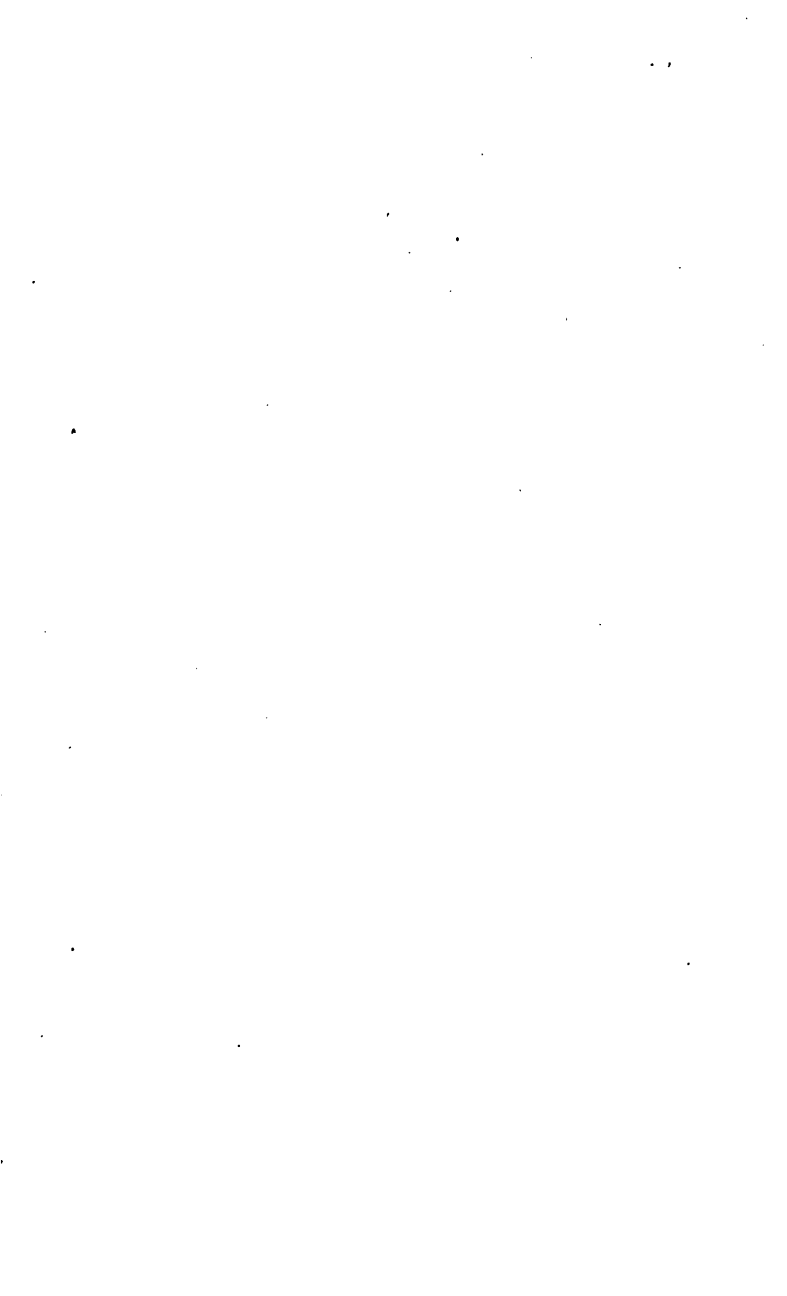
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43. 1034.







THE  
CHURCH OF CHRIST  
POURTRAYED,

AS TO  
*The Peculiar Character*

OF ITS  
UNITY, ORDINANCES, VISIBILITY,  
AND  
SPIRITUALITY.

BY THE  
REV. C. I. YORKE, M.A.  
RECTOR OF SHENFIELD.



....*Nil mafus generatur*....  
*Nec viget quicquam simile aut secundum.*

LONDON:  
JAMES NISBET AND CO. BERNERS STREET.  
MDCCCXLIII.

J. DENNETT, PRINTER, 121, FLEET STREET.

## PREFATORY DEDICATION

TO THE

REV. H. ROBINSON, D.D.

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MY DEAR ROBINSON,

I have great pleasure in dedicating to you the following Treatises. With the exception of considerable portions of the second, they consist of matter not previously published by me.

As I may be supposed to have plagiarised the title of my work from the somewhat similar title of one by the Archbishop of Dublin, I would mention, that it was suggested to me by a friend who had never seen the Archbishop's "Kingdom of Christ delineated."

The subject handled by me has been suggested by the controversies of the day. I have not, however, adopted a controversial manner ; it being always my wish,



with God's blessing, rather to elucidate and establish principles, than, without urgent necessity, to assail persons.

I have endeavoured to be as distinct as possible. A vague *mother-of-pearl* style is the style of a writer who merely wishes to produce an *impression* upon his reader's imagination, without leading him honestly and strenuously to explore truth. A distinct style is also most fair towards those who differ from you. By frankly throwing your opinions into definite propositions, they can the more easily point out where there is any fallacy in them. I have often, in reference to this, thought of that Homeric hero, who expressed his determination to go forth and fight bravely, because he would thus *either acquire glory for himself or give glory to another*. (Il. M. 328.) (n)

That there may be discovered some, if not many errors in what I have written, I do not doubt; yet my conviction is complete, that time, or rather the providence of God, will seal the correctness of the principal arguments. As there is con-

fessedly no subject amongst Christians more liable to be misconceived, in consequence of our common pride, prejudices, and selfishness, so can there be none, farther advances in the comprehension of which may reasonably be expected to be made, by dispassionate enquirers. Indeed, with regard to *all* subjects, no limits can be placed to the possibility of our obtaining more knowledge. Truth is known by the all-wise God perfectly and purely; by the angels imperfectly but purely; by man imperfectly, and through a medium most impure; and therefore should he continually strive for a better acquaintance with it.

It may be objected, however, that those who have given in their adhesion to a settled system cannot consistently investigate *this* subject; all men, however, do so in private, and many of our highest dignitaries have done so in public. Were, indeed, a man to entertain serious objections to the Church of England, on the ground that there should be no establishment, or that its Articles and Liturgy con-

tain great errors, he, of course, should not belong to it for an hour. But not entertaining these objections, his very love for the system should prevent him from keeping his thoughts fixed, like the wings of a fly in amber, and should stimulate him to search into and to lay open those principles, which in God's providence may ultimately prove beneficial to *every* system.

I say, to every system, because very many of the arguments in this work will be found, if just, to press quite as heavily upon what is *false and worldly* in the views and workings of other communities, as of our own. At the same time, it must be acknowledged, that we should always strive most to improve that, which lies nearest to ourselves.

There may appear to be some repetitions and some omissions in this work. The apparent repetitions were unavoidable, because we are, throughout, contemplating the same object under divers phases. They will not, however, I think, be found injurious to the general effect.

Concerning the omissions, I would say a few words here. Such may be supposed to be the topics of ordination, fasting, and the observance of the Lord's day. With respect to ordination, the principle of it I consider to be included in what is said in the third treatise upon ministerial organization; that principle *not* being that by imposition of hands, ministerial virtues are transmitted, but that simply those who are set apart for the work of the ministry are thus solemnly dedicated to God. Imposition of hands was, of old, an act beautifully significant of there being particular blessings asked for particular individuals, thus pointed out. (Gen. xlviii. 14. Numb. viii. 10.) There is no more intrinsic power or virtue in that act, than in the act of *kneeling*: and in our own liturgy, earnest faith and prayer and spirituality are upon the part of the recipients *evidently presumed*. Fasting also, it did not seem requisite to bring forward, in the second treatise, where, if any where, it should have been placed. It cannot, as it strikes me, be

looked upon by any one as an ordinance of universal obligation. There never was more than one fast appointed by God, the fast upon the day of atonement. This was before Christianity. And after its *perfect* establishment, full as the epistles are of *minute preceptive directions*, there is none upon this point except the rejected passage in 1 Cor. vii. 5. Nor can our Lord's example or that of the Apostles' be considered to establish fasting as a duty. For in the transition-state between Judaism and Christianity *many* were the religious observances, which are now abrogated. When these facts are noticed, and moreover, that, during the whole of the patriarchal times nothing is said of fasting, it will be clearly seen, that it would have been out of place to have introduced it among the great ordinances of our religion ; whatever may be one's own opinion as to the utility of retirements for the sake of prayer and meditation. With respect to the Lord's day, it is intimated in the third treatise, that there can be no question of

its being of universal obligation. It would have interrupted the current of our observations to have remarked there, what may be remarked here, that there need be no difficulty about the *change* of day. Looking to Exod. xx. 8, where the day of the week is not mentioned, in connection with Gen. ii. 3, the just conclusion seems to be, that one day out of seven should be kept holy; and the conduct of the first disciples, not shewn us by tradition merely, but by the Word of God, sufficiently indicates that the first day should be that one. Indeed no day, amongst us, could *exactly correspond* with a Jewish day. The Jewish day was from sunset to sunset, ours is from midnight to midnight.

Not neglecting what others have said or written on the subject; I have endeavoured to think out every point by itself, with the Scriptures ever before my eyes or in my mind. (n) I have also never allowed myself to be troubled about *possible* consequences. I conceive, that in diligently seeking theological truth, we have no more

to do with consequences than a philosopher has in seeking for physical truth. Nor have I ever taken the easy course of fixing upon two conflicting opinions, as extremes, and then advocating an intermediate one. This is surely a very idle and useless method. For, firstly, in the wide circle of opinions, *any two may be chosen at will*, and called extremes, and, secondly, it may frequently happen that the extremes and the medium are all equally erroneous. The medium between two conflicting opinions of savages and idolaters about the world or God, is not Newtonianism, nor Christianity.

I have throughout desired to repress within myself any antagonistic feeling, having learnt from history (Jahn) that the Pharisees and Sadducees, by mutual repulsion, drove each other more deeply into error, and that Luther, from the very vehemence with which he assailed the errors of Münzer, recoiled into consubstantiation. It has, in short, been my design to contemplate and examine truth itself, from a pure, and glowing, and elevating love and

preference of it, to every existing thing; and so far as I have been enabled to maintain this temper, has grown within me the persuasion, that it is a temper attended with so thorough a delight and satisfaction, as to make the heart invulnerable to whatever unfair criticism or personal invective may be directed against you. “*Juvat integros adcedere fontes.*”

It may be thought that I am laying up for myself consolations, in the prospect of what I have written being treated with indifference or contempt, yet must I further state my belief, that *any* work upon our subject would have to encounter great difficulties in the way of making any impression upon the public mind. There is a difficulty springing from the apprehension some men have, (an apprehension by no means *entirely* irrational,) of present arrangements being discomposed; there is another from the way in which men's political and religious sentiments are intermingled, some being ready at once to embrace what has a democratical, and others



what has an aristocratical aspect; (*n*) there is a third from the arguments to which, in *petty local skirmishing*, combatants have, on both sides, rashly committed themselves; there is a fourth from the influence of self-interest or self-importance; and a fifth from that of the imagination.

The last is the most formidable. The learned men of our day, like the learned philosophers of a former day, are by no means exempt from it. The strange theories which, it is told us, such men as Cassini and Descartes dreamt of in respect to astronomy, have too many analogous theories among divines. These theories are frequently generated, not mainly by a desire to deceive, for the sake of gaining some worldly end, but by a *morbid enthusiasm*. Hence is it that men have written not merely with subtlety, but with deep feeling concerning the church, baptism, and the Lord's Supper. The first has thus been viewed as a living abstraction, winning with feminine graces, and radiant with divine majesty; the second has thus been

viewed as a rite, the water used in which is transparent and luminous with regenerating power; and the third has been viewed as one, in which the body of the Lord of glory is actually assimilated to the bodies of its recipients, there, like fire producing fire, to absorb all "our mortality, death, and corruption," and impart its own "immortality, life, and incorruption." This *morbid enthusiasm* is the most potent enemy to the dominion of pure truth. Opposed as its efflorescent creations are to the testimonies of our senses, the convictions of our reasons, and the Word of God, there is in them that of beauty and of desirableness which make them most formidable obstructions to those who love to represent all things, especially divine things, as they really are.

I have only to add, that in the last Treatise I have used the term "Church of Christ" in a larger sense than in some parts of the other treatises. This was, of course, done intentionally. The Christian dispensation is simply the embouchure of



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## THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

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I. The term Unity. II. The selfish, rational, and christian love of Unity. III. Three wrong means of producing Unity. IV. The liability of these means to two great charges. V. The only true cause and principle of Unity. VI. The proper conduct of Christians consequent upon their knowledge of this principle. VII. Unity thus produced does exist and should be increased.

I. THE TERM UNITY. There is majesty and power even in the sound of "unity." Like other abstract terms, such as "glory" and "liberty," it always falls with a certain force upon the ear. We feel that it is intended to express a great thing and a good thing. Whether the reference is to agreement in things heavenly or in things earthly, and whether the agreement be supposed to con-

sist in *sympathy of feeling, unanimity of opinion, or uniformity of action*, separately, or together, there is still a superior charm in the term "unity."

II. THE SELFISH, RATIONAL, AND CHRISTIAN LOVE OF UNITY. There is a superior charm in the name, but the thing is loved with very different affections. There is a *selfish* love of unity, a *rational* love of unity, and a *Christian* love of unity; and all men are liable to be affected by the one or the other of these loves. *There is a selfish love of unity.* Individually men are liable to this, when, through pride or morbid sensitiveness, they are impatient of opposition or contradiction. This love of unity burns in the heart of every private and public tyrant, and continually frets the bosoms of those theorists who, not being settled in a fixed and happy knowledge of essential truth, tremble lest the very voice of discussion should disperse the airy fabrics of their fancy. Collectively men are liable to this selfish love of unity when, simply with a view to some worldly end, they combine

together in a class or party against some other class or party. These combinations may be political or social, they may exist amongst the higher or lower ranks, but the viciousness of the root whence they spring is ever manifested, more or less, by the spirit they engender, and the means they sanction. *There is a rational love of unity.*

By this is meant that sentiment, by which man, merely as a rational creature, might be affected, when he surveys the world in which he lives. In regarding the wide panorama of human life, he will indeed perceive, that God in his mercy, from age to age, contrives partially to unite men, in spite of all the disconnecting power of their passions. By their instinctive affections, by their mutual dependence, by their national laws, the body is tempered together, and not permitted to destroy itself. Nevertheless the eye of intelligence might naturally become dimmed with tears, when it perceives what deplorable evils are produced, and what glorious benefits are lost, through a want of a better and deeper



unity. If this existed, instead of nation tormenting nation, and individual tormenting individual, by war and slavery, and every kind of injustice and unkindness, there would be throughout the world a general system of amelioration. Under the patronage of peace, art and science would be daily enlarging the boundary of man's enjoyments and attainments. "Peace, peace," was the incessant moan of the generous Falkland, when oppressed by his foresight of the wretchedness and ruin civil war and mutual folly were bringing upon his country; and "peace, peace," might be re-echoed by any thoughtful philanthropist, when he notes how the advancement of the human race is impeded, and its degradation aggravated, by its various and interminable dissensions. But a *Christian* is more than a philanthropist, and has a love for unity more strong and just. The spirit of his Master is in his heart, and he lives for his glory. He knows that sin was the cause of strife, and that Christ came to apply a remedy to all the effects of sin. He stand

with the first disciples in the garden of Gethsemane, and there he hears his divine High Priest pray aloud for his people, "that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the *world may believe that thou hast sent me.*" And thus is he led not only to desire, but diligently to labour for the promotion of that unity, for which such a prayer, at such a time and in such a way, was made by such a person. Conscious, indeed, he is, that *in its perfection* this unity, like truth, and holiness, and every good thing, may be attainable only in heaven, or as to some it may appear, in the millennium. Nevertheless it must *begin* now. It was spoken of by the lips of truth and love as being a most powerful means of convincing the world; and therefore though the fulness of its amaranthine beauty may be never witnessed here, it is a great Christian duty to love, and pray, and work for its existence and its increase every day.

III. THREE WRONG MEANS OF PRODUCING UNITY. *Implicit obedience to authority* is

the first of these. To be obedient to authority in the hands of man, can be *never* more than a duty of the second table ; it must always be subordinate to the duty of obedience to God. Let *civil* authority be considered first, and then *ecclesiastical*. "The powers that be are ordained of God ;" this is a great principle of Christianity, and strong as it is by the simplicity and completeness of its terms, it may seem yet stronger, when it is observed, that it was primarily given to the Roman Christians, living beneath the eye of the imperial monster, Nero, and that it is not only supported by many like declarations, but that it was illustrated by the constant conduct of our Lord himself. The principle, however, cannot be an absolute one. Civil authorities may command unlawful things, and then those who obey God rather than man are obliged to break off their submission to it, as the disciples did, when, in despite of the Jewish Sanhedrim, they ceased not to preach Jesus, and in despite of the Roman governors, they refused to

cast incense before the statues of the emperor. *Ecclesiastical* authority must stand in the same condition, even if this authority were undeniably *instituted, perpetuated, and regulated* by God. But it is not so in the Christian system. (n) And indeed the analogy drawn from the Mosaic is frequently urged in a way which proves that system also to be utterly misunderstood. In the Mosaic scheme, properly speaking, the *authority was kept by JEHOVAH HIMSELF, in his own sovereign hands*; He was personally the Father and King of his people; He spoke to them from the mercy-seat; He taught them by his prophets; He incessantly manifested his will with regard to their specific circumstances. Not so does He act now. He has given to us all that Gospel which was "preached to the poor," and written for the "weak and foolish;" and He has promised to us all the help of that Holy Spirit, under whose influence the heart is moved to gather to itself all sanctifying truth, as every little bird and insect is enabled by Him to find its proper food in

the midst of this wide universe. Indeed, no one can *consistently* maintain this principle; for if *that* is to be considered our ecclesiastical authority, under which we find ourselves, in God's providence, to be, then must the heathen never become a worshipper of the One God, the Jew never become a Christian, nor the Roman Catholic a Protestant. Here then there is no sound bond of unity; and a man who invests ecclesiastical authority with a power over his conscience, which God alone should have, is making an idol to his own destruction; for if "the blind lead the blind," the latter will not be excused by the misguidance of the former, but *both* will fall into the ditch. *An invariable attachment to a system* is also upheld as the proper means of producing unity. This means has many features like the former, and is no less inadmissible. In revelation there is no system definitively enjoined; there is no divine model given, around which Christians *can* stand and say, "Here is our fixed, unalterable pattern; we are united by our inva-

riable observance of it." Of a truth, even before Christ, God frequently varied the constitution of his church. Not only were there differences between the Patriarchal and the Mosaic order, but even the latter underwent several changes. It was set up in the Arabian desert; established in Canaan, it came "by degrees to excellent ornaments;" Samuel added the school of prophets; David the services of psalmody; Solomon the temple; and after this, like a flower which had bloomed, it began to wither, not only suffering from the neglect of kings and people, but being actually stripped of many glories by God himself, wielding the Babylonians for that purpose. When Christ had come, God sketched out for his church no lasting framework; to none of the apostles was it said, "see thou make all things according to the pattern shewed thee in the mount." What before had been *unchangeable in the sacrifices and offices, was so because it represented and foreshadowed the unchangeable realities of Christ; a shifting type could never have*

*corresponded to an immovable antitype.* But Christ has died and risen again; the shadows have departed; (*n*) and as of old it was not the *general form of worship in the synagogue*, but simply the *form of sacrificing in the temple* which was intangible; so now is it most clear, that Christians incur *great guilt*, if by their fond attachment to a system, they cease from making those rearrangements which the circumstances of the world and church demand. If the husbandry of our lands is unproductive, if our political constitutions are obviously unwise, the fault is theirs, who having the powers to make improvement, make none. Just so in matters spiritual. God has given us no settled form, because the aspect of our *universal and interminable* battle against evil is ever varying; and thus, instead of adhering to one plan of operation, it *may* be a man's duty to press plans, which, though *irregular* in respect of existing customs, may be most *judicious*, the eternal *principles* of Christianity being thereby acted out, whilst the former *rules* of its

human agents are more or less moved aside. *An invariable attachment to a system* must be therefore discarded as a means of unity ; since *there is in Christianity no system which is or ought to be itself invariable*. But there is a third means sometimes brought forward, *the influence of a strong corporate spirit*. This principle is in some persons united with the two former principles ; but it is also found, and that in its most vicious development, amongst those who pride themselves upon denouncing them. It is, however, quite as unsound, and as prolific of evil. A genuine Christian will undoubtedly be slow to act against the mind of those with whom he is most conversant. Charity, self-knowledge, and humility alike restrain him from courting fame, or giving offence by *unprofitable singularities*. Nevertheless, he knows that he must not move as a mere atom in a mass. (n) Whole masses have become corrupted, as the prophet and the apostle testify in the words, "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a *remnant* shall be saved."



And if a man merges his individuality, and makes it a point of honour or fidelity, as the *best* Jesuits did, to surrender the independence of his thoughts to the opinion and temper of the generality, then there is *little hope for them, and still less for himself.*

IV. THE LIABILITY OF THESE MEANS TO GREAT CHARGES.(n) Having now discussed separately these three false dependencies, two great charges must be brought against them alike. The first is, that history proves them practically to have borne the most satanic fruit ever witnessed upon the earth. It is *not, that no good has ever existed with them*, but that with that good some of the *worst* evils, the most matchless evils have been matured. By insisting upon them, as divine principles of unity, men have masked their ambition, their selfishness, their worldliness and partizanship by a holy plea; they have lulled their consciences, and inflamed their imaginations, and indulged their passions. Hence has it come to pass, that Christians have been

more cruelly abused by their professing brethren than by heathens; being by them subjected to persecution not consisting of furious *acts*, but formed into a malicious *system*; and being by them plied with tortures, not the *inventions of the moment*, but *the results of deliberate experiment*. And what has been would be again, did these principles prevail. For amiable as may be their first propounders, opposition would irritate them into cruelty, and if they were faithful to their own notions, and *had the power* to employ *force*, employ it they soon would, and think that they did God service in weeding out his church, and so reducing it to order. But this is not all. *Fraud* as well as force will ever vitiate the acts of Christians when they, *upon these principles*, labour after unity. To carry them into effect, adherents must be gained: the multitude must be propitiated as well as awed. Hence Christianity has been travestied and dramatised; the life and power of its divine truths has been drawn off and evaporated by gorgeous ceremonies; sinners,

by the animal sensations thus awakened, have been deluded into the notion that they loved God whilst they really hated Him; and, thus, in the midst of all this pretended homage Christ has been again and again crowned with thorns, and had a reed, for a sceptre, put into his hands. Nor is this all. Under these principles there is an inevitable danger of doctrines being adulterated, to secure followers. The proofs of this present themselves in *every* Christian community. Yonder the Romish Priest not only maintains that he can transform a piece of dough into the Lord of glory, but that he can remit the sins of those who faithfully adhere to his communion; here the hyper-episcopalian teaches that instrumentally he regenerates every child that he baptizes; and there the opponent of establishments seals his lips upon the points most obnoxious to his friends and hearers, daring not in America to denounce the hell-born atrocities of slavery, nor in England to curb the political discontents of self-interestedness in dis-

guise. This is the first great charge: a charge levelled against the principles more than against the persons who hold them. Thank God, *there* is, in *some* men, what may be called a *happy* inconsistency, in consequence of which they frequently adopt principles which are essentially discordant with each other; and whilst they surrender, with Pascal and Fenelon, their *imaginations* to the bad ones, their *hearts* are mainly under the sway of the good and heavenly ones.

The second charge against these principles is no less solemn and momentous than the first; but it may be stated very briefly. They tend to interrupt the direct communion of soul with God, and the sense of direct responsibility to Christ. No authority, no system, no party will shield or shelter us in the day of judgment. Great and small must we, in our own persons, be judged, and be distributed. Every sheep must enter into the celestial fold beneath the hands of Him "who tells them;" and unless they have below known *his* voice, unless they have, in the "green

pastures" and the dark valley, been guided by his rod, there will be no admission for them above. As Moses went up by himself, and conversed with Jehovah face to face, so must we spiritually hold intercourse with God; for only by this intercourse with Him, unintercepted but by himself in Christ, can our spirits be purified and our minds enlightened. Glad, indeed, should we be to act *under* others, and *with others* for his name's sake; but ready should we also be to act, if need be, *without*; yea, if need be, *against* all the authority and all the example in the world.

V. THE ONLY TRUE CAUSE AND PRINCIPLE OF UNITY. When the soldiers of Xenophon descried in the distance the tremulously bright blue of the waters that were to bear them home, they embraced and wept. A like joy should be experienced by the Christian who, desirous of ascertaining the true source of unity, has worked his way through the strange land of fallacies, and at last catches a glimpse of that of which he is in quest. But can it

at once be stated what is the true source of unity amongst men? It can. It is their being under *the same great moral law*. What is it that unites the universe? *There* is, undoubtedly, great diversity; (*n*) objects of every colour, form, and kind; properties, functions, operations, and relations without end; one world of life within another; and, yet, a mutual dependence and a harmony of action attesting the whole, with all its parts, to be the work of *one* supreme intelligence and power. Whence is this unity? As subordinate laws maintain all the subordinate combinations, so does *one grand physical law* maintain the grand and ultimate combination. The physical law of attraction is the universal chain of matter. And *the moral law of the love of God* is the universal chain of mind. Man cannot be intimately united with man by any thing which does not intimately affect his whole nature. The law of uniformity does not do this; it is far too shallow; and indeed ought never to be put forward in *direct* connection with unity at

all. (n) Its merit, when it has any, is that it facilitates supervision, and the provision of all the instruments of labour. Thus is there so much of it *in the works of man, and so little of it in the works of God*. No! It is only the principle of love to God, which permeates and prevails over man throughout, and that, as a principle of unity. What was it that first divided mind from mind? What was it that led Adam to accuse his Eve, and Cain to murder Abel? It was Satan succeeding in his attempt to interrupt the action of this great moral law. As, then, division ensued upon its eclipse, unity must ensue upon its re-appearance. You must reverse the cause to reverse the effect. But how is this reversion to be made? Simply, by making God known through the gospel. God was lost in Paradise, and is found in the gospel. All that bloomed in Paradise and all that shone over it could make no atonement for man's sin, nor take away his fear; it rather might be considered as standing aloof from him, and bearing testi-

mony against him. All that is in the gospel wins him forward; proof follows proof, assurance is crowded upon assurance; until it is both understood and felt that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." Then the "royal law" of love recommences its dominion. And, then, between his heart and the hearts of all who are similarly blessed, there is a mutual attraction which, in proportion to its growing strength, knits them together more and more intimately. This principle of unity is spiritual, is pure, is eternal, is universal, is efficacious. (n) It is spiritual; and, therefore, only worthy of a spiritual creature. It is pure; for it is produced by truth and is supported by the view of no low, sordid, or worldly object, but of God himself manifested in all the richness of redeeming mercy. It is eternal; "my spirit will never cease to love you," said a converted heathen to his teacher. It is universal; natural love, on this side, is frequently attended with aversion on that, friendship to one by aversion to another; and *national*



*hate* frequently assumes the name of patriotism: the love of God, however, brings a man to love *most dearly* those parts of God's creation which are nearest to him, and yet to love *truly* all that God loves; it teaches him to feel himself one with saints in all ages, and angels in all worlds. It is efficacious; it lights up a heaven within a man's own soul, it happily *unites him within himself*, as God is united in himself, as to all his affections and his powers, and it pours this man abroad for the general advantage of his brethren and of all mankind. This is the principle of unity which the church of Christ should invariably maintain, and press in place of every false one; for this, alone, is not superficial nor mischievous; this, alone, joins man with man, *within and without*, as a *sentient, moral, rational, and immortal* creature.

VI. THE PROPER CONDUCT OF CHRISTIANS CONSEQUENT UPON THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF THIS PRINCIPLE. The principle being admitted, how should Christians act.

*consistently with such admission as to external distinctions in spiritual and in temporal things.* Firstly, *As to external distinctions in SPIRITUAL things.* It must never be forgotten, that *no association*, whether called church or sect, has any divine and absolute right, on which to demand general support and adhesion. It must never be forgotten, that of old, *Jehovah* in person, maintained the immutability of a system which *represented an immutable Christ* and an *immutable salvation* by seals which all could read, such as were the destruction of Korah and his company, the sudden death of Uzzah, and the leprosy of Uzziah, as well as the budding of Aaron's rod, the voice from the mercy-seat following the right sacrifices, and the illumination of Urim and Thummim granted to the true priests. But these seals, penal and benedictory, have ceased. Signs and wonders were indeed wrought on the introduction of Christianity, but they were seals to its essential truths, not to its official constitution. The church of God, once under tutors and

governors, (Gal. iv. 2,) is so with respect to externals no longer; but it is like a child arrived at manhood, at least so far as this, that it is no longer to move according to a literal directory, which could never be full and explicit enough for its multifarious circumstances, but according to what it judges to be its Author's mind from the eternal lessons of his word. Every community must then be tried purely upon the ground of its being serviceable and edifying or not. It is useless for any one to say, "I am weary of the disputes between rival bodies, and am resolved to maintain the supremacy of *one*, for I must have some rest for the sole of my foot." God forbids us to dream of rest in this way. Certainly we should not *love* change; but we should know that *rest is to be enjoyed in Christ, not in any administrative economy*. And were we allowed to find our rest in an exclusive attachment to any inviolable system, it would be wo to ourselves, to the church, and to the world; *stagnation would ensue, and the propagation of the great*

*principle of genuine unity would be at a dead stand.* For not only has an excessive stress laid on spiritual mechanism been always found to impede that very mechanism *in its production of good*; not only has the corporate spirit thus fostered tended to vitiate the whole community, by ultimately impregnating it with the feelings of a social, political, or mercantile association; but it is, in fact, next to impossible now to form any system which shall be self-connected, and at the same time *possess such a variety of instrumentalities, as comprehensively to work on the mass of the world at once.* When we find in practice, that the adherents of one system are chiefly from the aristocracy and the rural poor, the adherents of another from tradesmen, and of a third from miners, colliers, and manufacturers, we cannot but conclude, that these results have arisen from the peculiar adaptations of those systems. And, therefore, whilst with all his heart a Christian will strive to work his own system *well*, especially with regard to those parts of it

he believes to be most edifying ; and whilst he will be cautious in not too liberally fraternizing with any professing brethren, whose practices seem to him unfavourable to the diffusion of that truth whence love is born ; he will be also cautious lest, by his *indiscriminate* denunciations, he should check the principle of unity on the wing to some hovel, or even some class of men he never could have reached ; he will shrink from the responsibility of interfering with the free benevolence of some good Samaritan pouring oil and wine into the wounds of those who lay not in *his* way. The power of that grace, which works “ where it listeth,” he *neither dares nor wishes to restrict* to the agency he most approves of. He is sensible that the chariot of salvation cannot be compelled to move in the contracted pathways of human construction. When he, ministering in an establishment, speaks of the “ *church’s interests,*” he will mean the UNIVERSAL CHURCH OF CHRIST ; when he, if not of an establishment, speaks of “ *the cause,*” he will not,

as some do, signify the cause of his *connection*, but that of **RIGHTEOUSNESS AND TRUTH**. He will aim at *shaming down* the eccentricities of ignorance and fanaticism, by elevating a high standard of Christian attainment and knowledge; but he will not dream of claiming the right of being a *sole worker* for God, feeling how great is the world's need of help, and observing that for the perfecting of any thing in nature God uses many and various means. Thus, in reference to religious distinctions, will a Christian act in consonance with the principle of unity, and in support of it. And were this generally done, undoubtedly our Lord's supplication would be generally realized; his people would be one with one another *as he was with the Father*, for his oneness with the Father was not in identity of *appearance, office, and redeeming work*, but in identity of *nature*. Then too would be felt the illustration of the apostle Paul, "from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that, which every joint supplieth, according to the

effectual working in the measure of every part maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." And then would be experienced the refreshment and the invigoration described by David, when he said that unity was like "the precious ointment of Aaron," and "as the dew of Hermon." But there is another observation to be added, before the question of distinction in spiritual things is dismissed. There are distinctions of this kind arising not only from the divers organizations of religious bodies, but also from the divers gifts and offices of those within the bodies. So that, even if the whole Christian world had but one organization, still true unity there would not be, without the prevalence of *the great moral law* amongst them all. Rome boasts of its unity. In what does it appear? Simply in its name and in its form.(n) But if you pierce that thin enwrapment, you will find it eaten by dissensions far worse in their spirit and in their operations than any that have ever grown up in Protestantism. Let, however, this love of

God be prayed for and upheld as the parent principle of unity and of every good thing, then *in the degree* that the Spirit of God creates it there will be peace and order within as well as goodwill without each Christian community. Every one will then gladly move in his own orbit, whether less or greater. The prophet Elijah, the little maid enslaved by Naaman; Lois and Eunice; Timothy and Titus; Apollos and Paul; all, in short, in every age and situation, thus co-operate; they all contribute something to the good of the church, and indeed to that of the *universe* at large.

Secondly, *as to external distinctions in temporal things*. Plato is referred to as having said that the Athenians had many good laws, but that they wanted one more to make those good laws kept. The love of God in Christ is that sublime *primum mobile*. It is the mainspring to every wheel in the complicated relationships of man. It removes jealousy and discontent by instilling equal blessedness into the heart of king and peasant. As both the



lily and the cedar, fed by the same air, light, rains, and dews, is beautiful in its place, so is every one thus influenced happy in his work. (n) The man, whose heart has not been opened by the true love of God, looks at the difference of his station from that of others, and frets and wonders as he notes it; but the Christian child, who has been led with the first lisplings of his voice to call God Father, may easily be brought to understand that in the eye of the infinite God there is no vast interval between his place and that of the brightest angel. Nor this only; but when a man is *sinking* in the world, animated by this principle, he will not repine, nor jar against those who rise above him. Loving his God in heaven, he will still love his fellow-creatures upon earth, and as Jonathan quietly took up the inferior position which, in respect of David, God assigned him; so will it be visible that God moves his instruments hither and thither, not only for their own, but for the universal weal. This view of unity has been too much omitted. Busy

with the contending merits of *ecclesiastical* arrangements, the power of the gospel, in restoring harmony throughout the whole *social* frame, has been too little dwelt on. And yet the former exist but for the latter ; they exist but for the purpose of so, under grace, applying the gospel to man's disposition, that he, being at peace with God, shall be at peace with his fellow-creature in every circumstance of time and of eternity.

VII. UNITY THUS PRODUCED DOES EXIST, AND SHOULD BE INCREASED. The unity, which the church of Christ should maintain within, and promote without, even in our present circumstances, *exists*, and that substantially though imperfectly. Its existence is proved by an identity of motives and aims ; proved by that similarity of sentiment which makes the Christian find a new brother in every converted man ; proved by petitions and by praises like in matter and in manner and offered to the same throne of grace ; proved by the general correspondence of our forms of worship.

Were some enlightened heathen, such as Cicero, to rise up and come amongst us, he would perceive little outward difference amongst the purest Christians, unless his attention were loudly *called to it* by some formal partisan. (n) The grand and glorious features of the Christian faith, would (supposing him to be at all disposed to it) stand out before him, in bright contrast with those of heathenism; if our paltry animosities did not obscure them. Deeply then ought we to lament that the enmity, which once raging between Jew and Gentile was slain by the cross of Christ, has broken out so frequently amongst his own people. And earnestly should we strive that this evil be met well and wisely. Not by our violently provoking those, who have separated from us, to *build the walls of their separation higher, and to arm them like the walls of fortresses*; but by our leading them to blend their distinctions together as the tints of the rainbow. Not by our rushing upon political questions (of doubtful importance, however sound in prin-

ciple) into the arena of public and tumultuary strife, but by our carefully occupying ourselves with the main and master objects which are before us. Not by our mutually trumpeting forth assertions, *which are all, without any exception, destitute of a divine warrant*; but by our candidly confessing the faults of our persons and of *our institutions*; by our taking *the blame of these faults upon ourselves*; (n) by our *imitating one another*, when it is practicable, in those acts and plans on which the divine blessing has descended; and principally by growing in grace and knowledge; for the more pure our feelings and enlarged our understandings, so much the more perfect and comprehensive will be our spirit of fellowship. Then with the temper of a dove uniting that of an eagle; and looking from on high on the wide horizon of divine mercy, we shall repeat after the Apostle Paul, “grace be with all those that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity.”

One thing cannot be gainsaid; that is, that *methods the reverse of these have been*

*tried to the utmost of man's ability and power*; and that they have utterly failed, again and again, even as to the production of *apparent* unity. No more wily arguments, no more fierce denunciations, no more cruel persecutions, can, one must think, be used, than have been used already by contending parties against each other. Let those weapons be broken before the cross; let the methods here alluded to be substituted. By a sweet temper, by a heavenly life, by calm reasonings, by ingenuous confessions, (n) by looking on the beauties more than on the blemishes of each other, and by always striving for more of Christ, we may soothe each other's minds, and generally establish the conviction that *true* unity consists in *loving* and the *best* uniformity in *resembling* God. (n)

## THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

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I. The Scope of the Essay. II. The universal character of the Ordinances of True Religion. III. Their peculiar uses and distinctive features. IV. The specific Ordinances of the Church of Christ. V. The Ordinances of Hearing and Reading. VI. The Ordinances of Prayer and Praise. VII. The Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. VIII. The natural dislike to a simple view of the Ordinances. IX. The operation of the Holy Spirit in the Ordinances. X. The character of the Ordinances harmonious with that of all the works of God.

I. THE SCOPE OF THE ESSAY. The ordinances of Christ form a subject, which ought to be deeply engaging, not only on account of its own intrinsic beauty, but also on account of its close connection with ano-

ther of no less interest, the unity of the church of Christ. Already an endeavour has been made to remove the false imaginations which commonly obscure the simplicity of the latter, it is now wished to do the same office for the former. And this is in truth one of the most legitimate attempts of the scriptural theologian. Michael Angelo used to say that the figure he was forming was already within the marble, and that he plied his chisel to set it free. And so of every religious truth ; it exists in perfect and distinct beauty within the word of God, but in order to behold it clearly, we have continually to strike away various fanciful notions with which men have encumbered and concealed it.

It may, however, appear that this attempt both savours too much of a pride in our own reason, and is inconsistent with ideas previously thrown out in reference to that very subject with which this is closely connected.

*To the first objection* our reply is ; surely he cannot be justly accused of making too

much of the mind of man, who contends against the foolish fancies which have been born and nurtured in that mind. Instead of designing to bend the Scripture to reason, our wish is, that human imaginative-ness should be not merely bent but absolutely prostrated before God revealing himself in his own word. Undoubtedly, were any one to say—"I propose to clear such or such a truth of *all* mystery," he would justly expose himself to blame and ridicule; but what can be more innocent than for him to say, that his aim was to clear the truth of the *peculiar* mystery which has been originated and fostered by human folly and corruption? We cannot indeed but conceive, that the real mystery of the ordinances of Christ consists not in their own nature, (as appropriate means to produce certain effects,) but in those immeasurable blessings of which they are the channels; blessings, the springs and issues of which are unfathomable both to men and angels, and must be so eternally. But here we have the bright mystery of love



and light, not the bewildering mystery of unscriptural imaginations.

*The second objection* may be as soon dismissed. The present argument may indeed *at first* appear necessarily to clash with that concerning the unity of Christ. If it be correct to say, that unity is spiritual, and that the greatest hindrance to it is the opinion, that the church has by prescription a fixed, unalterable form ; how, it may be questioned, can you assert that there are any fixed, unalterable ordinances ? Now observe, the *substance* of these ordinances is certainly and must ever be the same, yet has their *form* in some respects continually varied, so that there is here a correspondence, between this subject and the preceding one, perceptible at once. Besides which, it was never affirmed or intimated, that Christ fixed *nothing* in respect of his church ; He gave it a fixed revelation, and he fixed *substantially* the means of grace it was to employ for its own profit and the world's. And this He did, leaving to it the *liberty* and the *responsibility* of effecting

the best organisations it could, according to the circumstances in which it was placed. No one can doubt of this, who compares two analogous passages in the Old and the New Testament. Take from the former the directions concerning the *passover*, take from the latter the directions concerning the *Lord's Supper* (1 Cor. xi.); in the one, *time*, *place*, and *manner* are minutely ordered, in the other nothing is said upon these points, although the *spirit* of the ordinance is fully explained.

The conclusion therefore is, that in our dispensation the Lord of the vineyard has given his servants their work to do, and the instruments with which to do it, supplying to them, moreover, those general directions which, if laid to heart, will ever throw them into the order most effectual in respect of times and seasons. The Captain of our salvation has sent his soldiers to the battle, and *put weapons* of a *heavenly temper* into their hands, but the skilfulness and unanimity of their arrangements He has left to be the results and the reward of

their faith and knowledge and obedience to *his mind* in the gospel. To assert then that He has not prescribed nor sketched the constant form and movements of his army is not in the least inconsistent with the assertion, that He *has* given it certain means to be used throughout the warfare.

II. THE UNIVERSAL CHARACTER OF THE ORDINANCES OF TRUE RELIGION. Having thus stated the object in the following research, and having met two supposed preliminary impediments in the way, another reach is to be made. This must be done by briefly examining the ordinances of grace in general. And after it has been thus accomplished, we shall be able to pass on in a natural and unembarrassed course to the consideration of such ordinances, with regard to the *specific manner in which they were retained, remodelled, and perpetuated by our Lord*.

The ordinances of grace in general, what and whence are they? They are the means of living and growing spiritually, *ordained*

by God, and not, as the means of living naturally, left to the inventiveness of the human mind, stimulated by instinct, and aided by circumstance. When man was placed within the garden of Eden, he was to “dress and to keep it,” but no especial methods in this work were laid down. In the free use of his reason he had named the animals around him, and so was he to maintain and advance the beauty of his bowers. And, when exiled from his birth-place, man was to “till the ground whence he was taken ;” but no instrument was put into his hands, no supernatural help was afforded him in this his aggravated labour. We see, then, that in the matters of bodily enjoyment and provision there was nothing and is nothing told and taught us immediately by God. The cause is plain : our reason was not to move mechanically, but to acquire strength by its having a certain play ; and, indeed, in this everchanging world we should, on any other principle, require continual inspiration. But it is not thus exactly in the matters of the soul

and spirit. The organs of sense, by which the reason communicates with external objects, could not, even in a state of innocence, enable man to communicate with God. In this primeval state he would have attained, no doubt, the idea of "eternal power and Godhead," but as to the modes of conversing with God, and worshipping Him, he must have needed, from the first, direct instruction; and that he had this instruction; that God drew near to him with peculiar manifestations in certain ways and times is shown by the accounts of the institution of the Sabbath, and by that of the tree of life being set in the centre of all the other trees; and by that also of "the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden," for the signs of this approach seem to have been familiar and well known.

But without attempting to pierce the golden mist of Paradise by any further speculations on the divine revelations, during man's short sojourn there, let us press onward to examine what were the dealings of God with our race after it had

fallen. In the *arts of this life* man walked on alone ; for without any supernatural communications his faculties were still adequate for the life he loved. Cities were built, cattle systematically tended, brass and iron forged, and even instruments of music discovered. In these achievements God no doubt worked, behind the veil, by exciting and maintaining the powers of the human mind, and by producing those accidental (as we call them) concurrences, in consequence of which most astonishing inventions have been arrived at. He did not, however, overtly and directly interpose. But he *did* thus interpose in spiritual concerns. For more after than before the fall did man require, that God should “ take him by his arms,” and *grant him aid in his pursuit of things above him*.

We find accordingly, that by personal appearances, by dreams and visions, and by pure inspirations conveyed through the minds, and expressed by the tongues and pens of chosen men, God was pleased from time to time to make known below his

nature and his will. At first the *appearances* were more general, and afterwards, as more suited to the times, *the inspirations*; which accounts for the inspired persons being called in the earlier ages "Seers," and in the later "Prophets."

We find that God not only thus supernaturally gave men light and truth, but that He likewise established two other means of grace, those of prayer and praise. We cannot, indeed, determine whether these means were *introduced* by a direct injunction, or whether they were simply the results of grace moving the affections and enlightening the judgments of the saints. It might be conjectured, that in whatever manner Adam and Eve communed with God in Paradise, He expressly *told them*, when they had lost and left it, of his willingness to hear and bless them. It is, however, of no moment to ascertain this, nor to fix precisely the origin of these exercises. It is enough that they appear from the beginning to have been *stamped* by God. By promises to those who pray;

by threatenings against those who do not; by peculiar blessings sent in answer to prayer; by such favourable notices as that of Seth's generation, when "men (the reference seems made to *public assemblies*) began to call on the name of the Lord," and as that of Daniel, who, in the midst of his faithful prayer, was called "greatly beloved;" by the sublime strains given to the hearts and lips of dying Patriarchs; by the psalmody which God of old bestowed on his church militant on earth; by exhortations to use this psalmody, and by the signs of his gracious presence when the instruments of the Levites were "as one;" by these, and by many other ways, God placed his sanction and his seal on prayer and praise. And thereby are they, as methods of spiritual culture, distinguished both from *all* the doings of man relating to this world, and from those relating to the next, which have not been similarly accredited.

We find also, that besides the ordinances of hearing or reading, by which God draws



near to man, and besides those of praying and praising, by which man draws near to God, there have also evermore existed rites, of an expressive and emblematic character as to their form. These, before the Christian dispensation, consisted of sacrifice, circumcision, and the various washings, offerings, dressings, and, in fact, all the ceremonies of the Mosaic covenant. That these were all enjoined by God himself, his own record states in plain terms, except in the case of sacrifice; and in that case, as we know, that the sacrifices of the Jews and of their father Abraham were directed by God there cannot be a reasonable doubt, that the sacrifice of Abel, which God "had respect unto," arose from an absolute command given by God to his parents, when he made them "coats of skin, and clothed them." Indeed, even in Paradise, there may be said to have been emblematic appointments, both of a negative and positive description.

III. THEIR PECULIAR USES AND DISTINCTIVE FEATURES. Such then were, from the

beginning, those ordinances of grace, which incontrovertibly rested on the divine authority and will. But although our first inquiry ever should be, *what has God appointed?* our second should be, *why has God appointed it?* This is not irreverent, but the reverse. It *becomes* reasonable and responsible creatures, that they should trace, as far as they can, the wisdom and the goodness of their God in what He has made and in what He has ordered. And, as in the characteristic make and powers of an eye or hand, we, with great ease, see something at least of Deity, so in the ordinances of grace. Indeed, in order not to do so, we must intentionally and perversely look away from their fitness to the creature man, for whom (as our Lord said of the Sabbath,) they are made, and from their adaptation to the circumstances in which he is placed, and to the end proposed, which is his preparation for heaven. And although, undoubtedly, our obedience to God, in their employment, should come primarily from a childlike docility to his

word and will, yet our joy and comfort in it must be enhanced by a clear perception of their instrumental beauty. Now, in regarding this beauty, we cannot but be struck not only with that part of it arising from their obvious fitness, but also with that which comes from their union of simplicity by themselves with completeness taken together. We find that they divide themselves into three classes. The first consists, as before noticed, of those by which our spiritual ignorance and torpor are to be dispelled ; the second, of those by which, *though no new notions are imparted*, the previously suggested thoughts and feelings are called into exercise ; the third, of those by which we acknowledge God in reference to what he has revealed and *promised*. In the first, *God makes known himself and his will to us* ; in the second, *we address him* ; in the third, *we witness a good confession*, assuming and upholding the symbolic badge of those peculiar doctrines He has taught us. By the first, *life is given to religion* ; by the second,

it *breathes and moves*; by the third, it *unveils its face* (as far as can be done by ordinances) before the world.

We speak thus with regard to the *distinctive* features of religious ordinances. There are other features, as any one may immediately perceive, which are common to them all. All of them, for example, are means of grace, and are therefore great *proofs* of divine love, and institutional *pledges* of divine grace. When aged Jacob (afraid as he had been to go down to Egypt, not only because he mistrusted his own strength for the journey, but also his sons' tale of Joseph's life) saw the waggons Joseph had sent to carry him, his spirit revived. These vehicles were to him the plain and delightful proofs of Joseph's life, of Joseph's power, and of Joseph's love. And in the same manner do all the ordinances, (one as well as another,) by their very appearance bear to the spirit of man an assurance from the Spirit of the Lord, that to those who seek Him in the due use of them He will give every blessing they require.

But that *all* these ordinances have, in consequence of their divine appointment, a promissory aspect, is so self-evident, that it would be needless to insist on it, were there not some who maintain it as respects those of the *emblematic class alone*. It is, indeed, perfectly true, that in the establishment of emblematic rites God in his mercy affixed to his truths certain ceremonial seals perpetually recurring: but in the faithful observance of those rites man affixes, in like manner, his seals to the truths of God. That is, he observes them as *means*, in which light not only *these* ordinances, but *all* ought to give him the assurance, that they will be found sufficient for complete success, and are in fact the gages of it, simply for this reason, that *they were put into his hand by the hand of God*.

IV. THE SPECIFIC ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST. These remarks bring us to the ordinances of Christ specifically. Not one of them, as we have already intimated, was absolutely new. (*n*) They were the ancient ordinances, or parts of them, so

shaped or so simplified as to be agreeable with our dispensation, the difference between which and the previous dispensations was owing mainly to the great fact that *it* was after, and *they* were before the actual incarnation and death of the Redeemer. In consequence of this, all that was typical of future acts and blessings, and all that was designed to bind together and separate from the nations the seed of Abraham, was removed. The sacrificial priesthood, evermore representing Christ as the shadow represents the substance, was abolished for the first reason; as the less important laws relating to food, dress, and marriage were for the second. But the means of grace were so far preserved as that the identity of the religion of Jesus with that of Moses, Abraham, and Abel might be made no less conspicuous by its ordinances than by the spirit of its doctrines and of its precepts. After Christ, as before, these means are divisible into three classes, that of hearing and reading of the Lord, that of praying to and praising Him, and that of signifi-

cantly professing the faith He has delivered us. And as it is obvious, with regard to the first two of these classes, that in one form or another they have ever been, so the last will be found to be, in part at least, of ancient origin. For what is the Christian baptism, but the Jewish baptism of priest and proselyte, as it were, recast and made the initiatory rite into the creed and salvation of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and what is the Christian eucharist but a portion of the paschal service of our Lord's time remodelled and reinscribed with a more triumphant meaning? The ordinances of Christ, then, were not absolutely original institutions; and in this was wisdom. For not only thus is the mind's eye the more easily carried on to notice the connection of all that God in all times and ways has taught us; but we are also forcibly reminded, that the great Founder of our faith would have us know and feel, that its spirituality is its essence and its glory; on which account He introduced into the formal part of his ceremonial as little as possible that was novel.

But although the ordinances of Christ are not perfectly original, there is in them that of peculiarity, which it cannot but be instructive to discuss. This, therefore, shall we now attempt, not of course excluding from the view what belongs to them, in common with all means of grace, but so regarding and exhibiting them as to gain and give the most correct and complete idea of them we can.

V. THE ORDINANCES OF HEARING AND READING. And, firstly, of hearing and reading, as ordinances of Christ. There is in the New Testament a striking prominence given to hearing as dependant upon preaching. Our Lord gave his disciples that *most wonderful gift, the gift of tongues*, (n) and sent them to preach the Gospel to every creature; baptism being its seal of confirmation and subscription. Paul declared he was not sent to baptize but to preach the Gospel. Timothy and Titus were to “preach the word,” and in *THIS ministerial work especially* to be examples to others. But why multiply proofs? The



prominence of preaching and hearing as an ordinance of Christ, implied by the pentecostal coronation with tongues of fire, is *established* by such declarations as that one, "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe;" and that other, the Gospel of Christ "is the power of God unto salvation." And yet it may on some grounds appear extraordinary that such should be the case. For in the Christian dispensation there is *no* gift of inspiration to the preachers, and there *is* the perfect Bible for every one to consult at will. Both these facts might appear to render preaching less glorious and less needful *now* than heretofore. But the decisive explanation is, that the open preaching of the Gospel in our day, has taken place of the typical services of a former day. The great work of redemption has actually been done: the very Lamb of God has shed his blood: the marvellous reconciliation has in substance been effected, and thus all, that relates to it, is with the living voice continually to be proclaimed. Before this had

occurred, the worshipper was guided gradually and gently onwards to a knowledge, at first unwelcome, that the Messiah was to be a suffering sacrifice, as well as King. Now, it is consistent with the gracious deed itself, that it should be continually kept in sight, and exhibited in all its bearings. Hearing and reading of the things of God have, indeed, always existed as means of grace; the patriarchs were "anointed" ones; the priests were enjoined to teach; then the Jewish prophets were raised up, who appear to have usually instructed "on the new moon and Sabbath;" and lastly came the worship of the synagogues, in which, after the reading of the Scriptures, any one who had "a word of exhortation" was requested to "say on." But as an ordinance of Christ, preaching appears to be graced and blessed in a superior degree. The continuance of his ambassadors is *a pledge of peace on the part of the King of kings; a mark of truth challenging universal examination; but more particularly, the*

*means by which it is to spread from man to man.*

It may, however, be supposed that as the Bible now is perfected, it would be better that men should not only read it by themselves, but that they should read it without the intervention of other men. "Surely, (it may be argued,) the word of God should by itself come fully on the heart, as the beams of the sun upon the earth; surely, in coming through so faulty a medium as the human mind, divine truth must be dimmed and distorted." But observe, not only does preaching not preclude reading, but is expressly designed to lead to it. The preacher has just to press the grapes and give the cup into the hearer's hand. He has not to dictate, he has not even *primarily* to inform, but he has to *arouse*, to *impel*, to *awaken*. The apostles both spoke and wrote: and if you compare one of St. Paul's speeches, with one of his epistles, the difference in the style, the connection in the aim, will be visible at once. And thus

at present the preacher's address is made, not in the way of giving perfect and infallible instruction, not as a substitute for the Gospel, not even as an *unerring* guide to the Gospel, but as a call to reflection upon the Gospel. He is, in reference to the Gospel, not to think for his hearers, but to excite them to think for themselves : and this by appealing to their judgments, warming their affections, and principally by touching their consciences. True, the principle of conscience is in every heart. But the pendulum often requires a touch from without to make it do its office. To give this touch requires no inspiration ; although, having been given, it does require, on the hearer's part, sincere prayer, and careful study of the Scriptures, that the effect may be permanent.

This, then, is the design of the ordinance of preaching, which, from its very nature, can never lose its importance. In a professedly Christian country, as in an entirely heathen one, it must ever maintain its place. Whilst the Christian course is a warfare ;

whilst the heart is naturally the fruitful bed and nursery of errors and of follies ; whilst the world, in its ever-changing combinations as to circumstances, is to any degree affected by the influence of Him who is the Prince of its choice ; so long will preaching be ever what it was in the beginning ; so long must the trumpet be sounded ; so long will it be requisite both for unconverted and converted men that the ministerial torch-bearer should enter the sleeper's chamber, bidding him throw down his curtains, and walk forth into the light of day. From this it follows, that the surest test of the spiritual state of any Christian community is the state of its preaching. Imperfect it will always be ; but where it is least imperfect, things will go best. Wherever in the public congregation the truth of Jesus is most effectively enforced, generally as to its fundamental principles, particularly as to the condition of the people hearing it, there will be most health and life. And though to listen and to criticise are more easy than to *pray and to practise* ; yet if this

ordinance be administered according to the *mind of God*, not according to the *taste of man*, more than any other does it carry with it its own correctives. It is liable, no doubt, to the *partial blight* of favouritism (1 Cor. iii.), but even this evil is not equal to the *general taint* of superstition, which would prevail without it. (n) For although it be true, that no wickedness nor mental reservation on the part of the minister (Art. 26,) nullifies the blessing of the *sacraments* to the sincere recipient, yet if there be a *deadness* in the ordinance of preaching, of *such recipients how many will there be?* When we speak of deadness, we speak not here of deadness through a want of natural parts or elaborate attainments. Something might, no doubt, be done even by the most ungifted preacher, if *sound in the faith*. If sound, were there no more power nor fulness in his discourses than in the Mahommedan muezzin's daily call to prayers, some blessing might still follow. But if unsound, he of course is worse than nought, for no general learning or accomplishments in a

physician can make amends, if he gives you poison. But we should desire not soundness only, we should aspire after excellence. For wherever *great good* is produced, it is ever produced, under God, by excellence in this ordinance. We do not assert that in all places and in all congregations a pure faith in Jesus will always follow a pure declaration of Jesus. No! both amongst Jews and Gentiles, at Jerusalem and at Athens, Paul himself preached, all but in vain. But where *substantial* effects ARE seen, they arise primarily under this ordinance. "Signavit viam flammis;" it hath marked its way and proved its efficacy by the spiritual kindlings it has produced. In whatever age, and in whatever country, it has been applied in impartial *fulness*, reverential *purity*, and heartfelt *power*, it has shewn itself to be of God, not by the uniformity of its success, but by its *pre-eminence* (as a moving and renovating instrument) over all other means. This ordinance should in every community be looked to with a prayerful eye: the Pres-

byterian may boast of what he imagines to be a scripturally simple platform, the Episcopalian may glory in what he imagines to be the undeviating succession of his ministers ; but all such claims as these *must* be most deleterious, without worth in the ordinance we speak of, because it is quite clear, that *then they would be the seals and sanctions of soul-destroying error*. The case of Judas has been referred to, with the view of proving that a man may be a lawful minister officially, although neither able nor disposed to set forth the truth. But Judas, under the direct wrath of God, was driven to his own place, before the work of propagating Christianity had been generally commenced.

It remains only to add, that, in order for there to be excellence in this ordinance, in the first place physical and intellectual suitability should be conscientiously considered by those who in the Establishment or out of it propose themselves for its administration : it is grievous dishonesty both to God and man for any one without power



of voice, or power of thought, to propose himself for a situation demanding both. But still, with *peculiar charges*, much in either of these two endowments may not be necessary ; one thing, however, in all churches and with all congregations, great or small, learned or rude, is essentially necessary. It is a *cordial love of the truths of revelation*, not merely as a scholar or a critic, but in reference *to the end for which those truths were given*. Every one who has not, or does not pray to have this love, is not a shepherd of the fold ; he is a “ thief and a robber ” of manifold and unmeasurable criminality. Every one who has it, and prays that it may be increased, will, more or less, be found a living conductor of heavenly holiness and blessedness ; equally eschewing *dictation and declamation*, but always endeavouring to bring the minds of his people *into close contact with that truth*, which is the transforming light of God’s countenance, he will be the means of calling forth in every class other children of light ; not labouring to make good pro-

selytes or good partisans, but good Christians, in his simplicity will be his strength, and he will attain whatever is just and good in the lower ends, whilst he is aiming at the highest with all his heart and soul.

VI. THE ORDINANCES OF PRAYER AND PRAISE. More might be said upon hearing and reading the word of God. But as we are discussing *public ordinances*, we pass on. It is only obscuring *this* view to say that the term *preaching* may be fitly applied to the edifying lives of Christians, to their publications, and to the catechising of children. This is quite true: but even the last of these can never be of much value as a means of congregational instruction. Catechising should be conducted in that free and simple way, which a love of God, and truth, and of children teaches, and which alone *draws out their feelings and their thoughts together*; but when it is so, it becomes unfit to be made much of in the public assembly. Leaving there these topics as lying out of the line of our subject, we proceed to the ordinances of

prayer and praise. In the New Testament great stress is laid on both of these. Indeed, the exhortations to the latter are scarcely less numerous than those to the former, although as the former became strangely deranged, so the latter was in time entirely taken from professing Christians, until Luther once again tuned our congregations, and brought them into at least some harmony with that foremost troop, who having, in the presence of their Lord, sung an hymn together, went with Him unto the Mount of Olives.

And very beautiful is the lustre with which these two ordinances shine out as re-appointed in the Christian dispensation. The solemn scenes of the Mosaic forms have indeed faded away. The high priest no longer presents the morning and evening sacrifice, no longer approaches God within the holy place, alone, whilst the multitude of the people are "praying without at the time of incense:" nor are the chorusses of the Levitical musicians now present to exhilarate the hearts of the pious expectants

of a Messiah yet to come. These outward stimulants have gone, but they have been replaced by that clearer light, through which we see Jesus in the heaven of heavens, the everlasting and all-sufficient Intercessor of his people. This knowledge is the life both of our prayer and praise. We refuse not in our public services the aid of a scriptural liturgy, we delight in fit and well-trained leaders (young or old) for our psalmody; but we *pray* and *praise substantially*, not because we have these aids below, but because we have this Intercessor upon high. A criminal at a bar may plead for himself, and not only so, but may feel conscious that pity in the judge's heart pleads loudly for him too, and yet his heart may be cold and hopeless, because he is sensible that neither his own tears nor the judge's tenderness can alter the just necessity of his death. Not so with the Christian worshipper. Jesus, perfectly and eternally omniscient of the efficacy of his own atoning sufferings, is, through faith, his Priest, and thus he prays and praises from

his soul. He knows, indeed, that God, as a holy being, is absolutely separated from sin, and, as the great "I am," can have *no need of him* or of his devotions; but as the Father revealing himself in the Redeemer, his wrath is changed to love, and he *has need* of those who "worship Him in spirit and truth," that in their acceptance and salvation the Son may be "glorified and admired."

This is the spirit of Christian prayer and praise. And you will observe that the **WHOLE MAN, JUST AS HE REALLY IS**, is thus enabled to come before the Author of his being **JUST AS HE REALLY IS**, without dread and without superstition. He need not, on the one hand, disguise his sinfulness from himself; nor on the other, have recourse to the washings of the pharisee, the exact prostrations of the Mahommedan, the austerities of the Hindoo, or the saint-worship of the Roman Catholic. His conscience is awakened, but in order to keep it quiet, he is not driven to any of those expedients by which, as a rational

being, a being that should have a MEANING in all his acts, he would be degraded. Confessing and conscious of his moral deficiencies and guilt, nevertheless with an unclouded mind, and a tranquil heart, he rises to this, the highest exercise he is capable of! Yes! for his prayer is, in fact, the cry of a *thoughtful and intelligent creature* thirsting for God and truth; his praise the expression of satisfaction the most reasonable in having found them.

Here is our general description of these ordinances, viewed without reference to the form in which they may be used. It has been given as you might give a description of the water in a stream, without saying any thing concerning the character of its banks. Of these, however, presently; in the meanwhile, pursuing the same course in our remarks on these ordinances as on those of hearing and reading, we have to notice next their *distinctive uses*.

The uses of these ordinances are of a two-fold nature. A labourer in his garden has, by his labour, a double benefit. There are

the health and strength gained immediately by the exercise, and the fruits of the earth in prospect. Thus in prayer and praise, in the adoring and rejoicing elevation of the mind to God, there is the *good in the act*, and the *good from the act*. The *good in the act* is present and palpable. By being enabled to fix the mind on God in the serious thoughtfulness of prayer, or in the pleasurable animation of praise, divine truth, and divine love become more thoroughly mingled with the mind, as wine with the water of a vessel which is stirred or shaken. Thus are we at once purified, comforted, and strengthened. And being so, we observe how well adapted these means of grace are to the constitution of our minds and instincts. Well known, indeed, it is that men (much more easily befooled in religious than in secular affairs,) have, in many cases, *manufactured* for themselves certain effects *in the act* of prayer, the mechanical cause of which has tended somewhat to discredit all effects whatever. Sad indeed it is, that in the

most elevated exercise of the mind men should act so foolishly ; yet the remedy is to be found, under God, in greater scriptural light : no one can imagine to himself any one like Timothy, who had known the Scriptures from his youth, becoming a ranter or a jumper.

As to the benefits arising *from the act* of prayer and praise, and more especially from the first, sceptics of all ages have sneered at the notions Christians entertain of them. Lord Bolingbroke said that we were not to imagine, that the courts of heaven were as those of earth, accessible to flattery ; and a modern writer, of unexampled popularity amongst the ten thousands of our operatives, (*n*) has represented it as though it were rational to expect good *in the act* of prayer, because to render it is, according to him, agreeable to those impulses he calls “laws of nature,” but not *from the act* of prayer, because this he deems inconsistent with what he supposes to be these “laws of nature.” Yet both analogy and Scripture affirm that these men are



wrong. Analogy shows that the workman not only by his toil obtains the general good of health and strength, but also a peculiar good in the article or the wages produced or acquired by his toil ; and the Scripture declares that with regard to the blessings of the soul, which alone are to the receiver true blessings at all, God “ will be enquired of” to grant them, and that He will grant whatsoever of them we “ ask in the name” of Christ. Nor is there any difficulty in meeting the objector on his own abstract ground. For if on this ground he asserts, that to pray to some god is a *natural law or instinct*, we may reply that there is *no natural instinct* which has not been implanted for the sake of some ulterior object besides that of the pleasure of feeling and expressing it : the instinct, for example, which urges us to take food has been given, that our bodies may be nourished by it. But to the cordial believer in revelation, the just answer seems to be this, *God bestows in answer to prayer those things which accord with his own plan of manifesting his glorious love and*

*wisdom by the salvation of man.* Now this plan has had in its execution various steps ; so that whilst it was *ever* in accordance with it to give *spiritual grace* to his worshippers, it was *of old* in accordance with it to grant also such gifts as a child to Hannah, and the restoration of his people to Daniel, because the *continuance and the preservation of the people* and the kingdom of Israel were necessary to the accomplishment of that higher work of redemption, in subordination to which all the works of creation, their frame-work and their laws, will be maintained to the world's end. Indeed, not only were these things necessary, but in terms more or less precise, they were *spoken of by God* as being necessary and according to his purpose, whence not to have prayed for them would have been a failure both in faith and in obedience.

On the *form and manner* of prayer and praise we are not called upon to dwell, because the great Author of our faith gave no full and positive instructions as to them. We at once perceive that the repeated "pa-

ternosters" of the Roman Catholic, by which a privilege is degraded to a penance, are unchristian; so with the loud cries of the ignorant Protestant, who, well-meaning as he may be, seems, like the priests of Baal, to think that the God of heaven and earth cannot hear unless awakened by a shout; nor less apparent is the unchristian character of the formal liturgist, whose conscience is lulled, and not only so, but whose heart is made proud by the punctiliousness of his verbal confession of sinfulness and need. But these faults, which *have to do* with form and manner, in fact find harbour because the essential character of the ordinance is unfelt and misunderstood. Let the minds of the worshippers be first enlightened as to this, and then, whether they worship in public or in private, (and neither will they neglect to do,) whether they use a liturgy or none, whether they sing with the aid of instruments, or with their hearts and voices only, they will in all cases worship "with the understanding" as well as with the lip, and with that decency and order,

united with that life and freedom, which beseem those who have been taught and encouraged by their Lord to render Him a loving, cheerful, and reasonable service.

VII. THE ORDINANCES OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER. The ordinances of the third class, the symbolic ordinances, are still before us. These are in our own church called *sacraments*. The term *sacraments* (like the two kindred terms *church*, and *clergy*) is perhaps an unhappy one, in respect of its indefiniteness. Classificatory terms in theology, *when indistinct*, (however allowable and useful they may be,) become more exposed to abuse than in any other kind of knowledge, because their vagueness permits them to be invested with a mysteriousness, to which, in religious things, the mind is by nature morbidly disposed.

Let us hope, however, that the Spirit of light and peace will guide us in this part of our examination. We feel that we especially need it here. When our Lord took up little children in his arms and blessed them, and when He, after the departure of

Judas, commenced at the Paschal table his last advices to his disciples, what two scenes of love did the angels witness. But alas! around the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, from that day to these, there have been not only the din and dust of clamorous and angry disputation, but at intervals the swords of contest and the fires of persecution. (*n*) The cause of the tumult may perhaps be traced to these ordinances being looked upon as the banners of distinction by each division of professing Christians; at the same time that the circumstance of their being symbolical, which renders them so highly useful to the simple-minded, also exposes them to the misconstructions of men who convert fancy into faith.

Leaving, however, the cause of the quarrels, the existence of them is certain; and, when one looks upon that amazing labyrinth of controversy within controversy, it might at first sight appear quite futile to entertain the hope of discovering any clue, by which to thread our way clearly through

it. Are children to be baptized or adults only? Is immersion or is sprinkling to be used? If immersion, is it to be with *any* water, or river water only? Is oil and is salt to be added to the water in the baptism of infants? Are sponsors requisite or not? Is incipient grace then communicated or not? Is the Lord's Supper to be given to children? Are the bread and the wine to be looked on as changed into the actual body and blood of Jesus? Is the bread without the wine sufficient? Is the substance of the bread and wine commingled with the substance of our Lord's body and blood? Does the intention of the minister make any difference as to the blessing received by the partaker? Are the sacraments necessary at all or not? These, with the questions of open or close communion, are *some* of the more and of the less important ones which gather on our horizon.

There is but one mode of meeting them, and that is to proceed in the way of direct statement, referring, as we proceed, to such prevailing notions as are most counter to

it. In doing this we of course wish to look on the Scriptures themselves with as intent and undistracted a gaze as possible. And then, as the mist of words rolls away, the *outline* at least of these ordinances becomes bright and distinct. We perceive almost at once, that they are *few in number, simple in matter, easy of observance, and free or equal* as to our enjoyment of them. Few in number, they are only two, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, both of which were instituted by the Lord himself; simple in matter, which is water, bread, and wine, or whatever may correspond in use with these; easy of observance, for there is nothing costly, nothing elaborate or artificial enjoined in their general form; free and equal as to our enjoyment of them, for ministers and people, rich and poor, Jew and Gentile, male and female, are admitted to them alike, at the same time, place, and manner. All this is unquestionable; and troubled as our minds may be by points not yet arrived at, here may we at liberty delight ourselves with the beauty of this outline. Here we

may stand and mark how evidently these ordinances in their characters agree with the character of Him, who, all glorious as He was within, was yet so plain and so accessible without. Here we may pause, and call to mind what a difference there is between our ceremonial and the Jewish, because (joyful thought) Christ has come; and what a difference between our services and the heathen, in the which the want of inward sense and spirit is disguised by such fearful rites as are now observed at Juggernaut, or by such proud and pompous doings as those by which Augustus, when triumphant, honoured himself, under the pretext of honouring the gods. (*Eneid. viii. 699, 715.*)

But having advanced thus far, we must now separate the two ordinances and view them apart. And firstly concerning Baptism. Baptism was appointed, or rather re-appointed by our Lord, with his own lips: but with his own hands He baptized none; Paul also baptized comparatively but few; and deacons baptized as well as presbyters. Having stated these facts, we have stated



ALL THE FACTS we know for certain bearing *directly* on *Christian baptism*. This should be considered, because it ought to moderate our heat, whatever our opinions may be in detail. There is not any word nor any deed in the New Testament by which either the baptism of adults only, or that of infants, can be *immediately demonstrated*. On both sides we must proceed in the way of *inference*. On both sides therefore we have not only to regard what is the more probable notion of the manner, in which the Apostles acted, but we have also (and perhaps mainly) to follow that which is most evidently for *edification*. We of the English church establishment baptize infants, and generally we do it by sprinkling; and analogy, the history in the New Testament, the present eastern habit of calling the act of pouring water on the forehead *bathing*, we conceive to justify us in these practices. But, at all events, there is no command either negative or positive given upon the point with Levitical explicitness against us, and thus, as in every like case, we hold that *the spiritual utility*

of what we do respectively should be a chief point in our examinations. The spirit of the ordinance we have already noticed. It is on the part of God *affirmative*, and on the part of man *subscriptional*: and this spirit is to a greater or less extent preserved in whatever mode or at whatever time the rite is by any specific Christian community administered to its members. We deny not, that the mode may be much better in one community than in another, and as being better may be more according to the will of God. But we do deny, that the question is to be settled *either* by inference or *tradition* only : by inference great mistakes, by tradition great abominations may be established ; and therefore we again exclaim “ utility, edification ; ” let these be reflected on with the greatest pains and prayerfulness. In all other matters but those of religion it is thus that man acts. The size and substance of the fruits of the ground prove to the agriculturists of this day the superiority of their methods of cultivation over those of their ancestors ; and were such men, as the

missionaries of Serampore, the invariable products of the Baptist persuasion, other persuasions being *comparatively* destitute of such men, there would *then* be the most imperative call upon all of a different administration, to see whether they were not in a very inferior state of Christian understanding.

Which is the *best* method amongst ourselves of administering baptism we need not argue here. Before, however, we pass further, we would venture to suggest, that it might be found in the baptism of infants, more according to our Lord's mind, and more generally beneficial, were it solemnized in some such way as this; let the child be brought by the *friends* and *parents* into the midst of the public congregation; let the first part of the service express, that the child is there dedicated to God in *virtue of the covenant of mercy*; let the minister then proclaim some of the promises of that covenant; let the child be thereon baptized, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; let, after this, minister, parents,

friends, and congregation, as Hannah of old, praise the Lord for his goodness, declaring their joyful gratitude for such a covenant, by which such a welcome is given to a descendant of Adam on his entrance into such a world, protesting also their fixed assurance that, the child being offered in faith, the Lord will seal the covenant in its heart, and earnestly supplicating not only that this may be so with it, but that their own abuse of this and all other spiritual privileges may not provoke God to make them the "savour of death unto death" instead of "the savour of life unto life."

Surely were the ordinance thus moulded and conducted in the various Christian communities at home and abroad, the transcendant glory of our religion would be more distinctly exhibited to the world; and thus the divine mind with respect to the use of symbolical ordinances more completely answered.

We now turn to the Lord's Supper. In doing which, the time, the scene, the cir-

cumstances of its first institution all come before us, and demand our fixed regard. Our Lord with his disciples, seated in the upper chamber, then formed *one paschal family*, (Exod. xii. 3,) He being the head, and they the younger members. The head was full of light, but the members were still in twilight darkness, the darkness of ignorance and of fear. They knew not that they should so soon lose their Lord; for they imagined that He directed Judas to "buy something against the feast," (of unleavened bread,) and yet they had a dread of some great impending evil. Their Lord had indeed spoken to them plainly of his passion, but through the power of the prince of darkness, they could not receive any idea of his sufferings, nor of "the glory that should follow." Therefore perhaps it was, that Jesus did not wait till after his resurrection to institute this ordinance, although to make us sure that it was his will for us to keep it, He, after his ascension especially, re-enacted it to the apostle Paul. He first appointed it before He died, and by

so doing afforded them comfort both at the time and afterwards: the calm majesty of his manner bespoke the conqueror, the more glorious Melchizedek who was not only to refresh the faithful, but himself to battle with the strongest foe, and who, before the encounter, had the perfect knowledge of a perfect triumph. They could not bear to hear of his death, much less of his crucifixion; and therefore his words and acts then explained to them that they need not fear, though his body should be broken, and his blood poured out, like the bread and wine, for *that thus would life be given them, and the new testament for ever sealed.*

Whilst the tempest was mustering its clouds without, so radiant with love and wisdom did Jesus make that upper chamber on "the night that He was betrayed."

But what is the spirit of this ordinance as *perpetuated* in the believing church? It "shows forth the Lord's death until He comes." It is a ritual epitome, wherein are depicted the blessings of redemption by

Christ, that is to say, *reconciliation with God, everlasting life, and brotherhood with one another*. We need not advert to all the opinions adverse to this simple view. The principal of them may be brought forward by the mention of two phrases employed by those who hold them. These two are "sacrifice," and "altar."

The same error in conception and in feeling is indicated by both these terms, for although some may use the one, who would shrink from using the other, yet in consistency as "a sacrifice" implies an "altar," so "an altar" implies "a sacrifice." Mark then, how by those who thus speak and feel, the spirit of Christianity is abstracted, the light of the mercy-seat shut out, the veil of the temple again let down. By these theologians we are not only sent back to "the beggarly elements" of the Mosaic law, but we are sent *beyond* them. Our form of speech and worship becomes more unchristian than the Jewish. For, as we know, there was no altar and no sacrifice within "the holy of holies" in ancient days. The

altar of sacrifice was not even near the mercy-seat; though the *table* was. And why? because a sacrifice and an altar proclaim a God, not yet formally propitiated, though purposing to be so. By them was made a constant avowal of uncanceled guilt; and hence the services connected with them are called "a hand-writing," (Col. ii. 14,) a bond, or an acknowledgment of debt, under the debtor's hand.

The table (together with the candlestick) stood before the typical, the earthly, and veiled mercy-seat, why then place an altar before the real, the heavenly, and the unveiled one? An *altar* speaks of death to be endured: a *table* tells of welcome; it tells of wrath changed into good will; it tells of giving, not requiring; of security and quiet; of provision; of a home; of a brotherhood, and of a father. And thus it was, that when, on the presentation of the sacrifices representing Christ, the thunders of Sinai paused, the elders of Israel representing the true church, ascended the mountain's side, and in the presence of Jehovah



“ate and drank.” (Exod. xxiv.) The eternal and effectual mediation of Christ is the Christian’s daily altar and daily sacrifice; and he, whose mind has once been filled with the brightness of this truth, has no room there for any of those cloudy figments, misshapen as Egyptian gods, which crowd around it. He looks above, and he remembers that Christ is all: he looks below, and with joy he sees *nothing but plain bread and plain wine*, the common food, and common drink of man, proving *by their very reality that nothing further supernatural in the work of redemption was required.*

Every wrong notion retires before this sound one. Not only does the judgment condemn them as irrational and unscriptural, but there is a degrading grossness in them, which revolts the heart of him who walks in the light of the pure Gospel’s truth. Let the council of Trent unblushingly declare that the whole and perfect Christ, body, blood, soul, and godhead is in every wafer; let Pascal (after Eucherius) with

more refinement, but greater inconsistency, (Letter 16,) assert that the church has three tabernacles, under the law, living on Christ figuratively, under the Gospel, living on Him both figuratively and in reality, and in heaven, living on Him in reality alone ; let Luther compare the bread (consubstantiated with Christ's body) to an iron united with heat in the furnace, (D'Aubigné, v. 3, 425 ;) let the men of our day cling to the terms " sacrifice " and " altar," yet he whose heart lives on Christ scarcely needs any argument to disenchant his mind of these delusions. He sees indeed that such a mode of interpretation would, in other parts of Scripture, lead to the uttermost absurdity ; he sees, that thus Christ at the institution must have held his own body in his hands, and that He must have given pure blood to those who were forbidden it even in their meat ; he sees that if the bread, though changed in form, remains in substance, the glorious body of the Lord must receive continual additions, and if it is altogether annihilated by the act of consecration, that nothing

symbolical and nothing *sacramental remains*; he sees, that thus the priest receives a creative power which makes him equal to God the Father; he sees, that the organs of sense lose their use, and that the monstrosities of heathenism can no longer be reasoned against; he sees that baptism itself is nullified as to its meaning, the new covenant *not* having been sealed; he sees, that the love of Christ is obscured, He being now offered by *the priest*, not “*by himself*,” he sees, that had the bread and wine at the Last Supper really been the broken body and shed blood of Jesus, there would have been no need of his being subsequently crucified; he sees, too, that the belief of the actual presence of Christ in flesh and blood has led to an administration of *unbroken bread without wine*, lest a crumb or a drop should fall and be trodden under foot; (n) he sees error rise on error, and absurdity on absurdity; but even if he did not, his view would still be clear, because he lives upon Christ, not as being in any way bodily present upon earth, but as

*having passed into the heavens in the very greatness of his priesthood, (Heb. iv. 14,) to be there, and thence the perfect cause of his acceptance, and the perfect source of his grace. (n)*

After these great topics, the question of close and open communion appears of minor importance. The term "close communion" may, indeed, be applied either to an entire exclusion of *all but those within* any particular Christian body, or to the rigid rules which any such body or community may enforce in respect to its worshipping members becoming communicating ones. But in whatever sense the term be used, the question is obviously one of discipline, to be determined only by considerations of the general good, and of the general spirit of our faith. We would therefore merely say concerning it, that whilst *some* general discipline is sanctioned by the conduct of the apostles, and whilst it is right to avoid, as much as possible, the giving to the world any handle of offence, great care should be exercised, that

for this purpose nothing like the Romish confessional be introduced. There is a double danger here; we may displease God by assuming his prerogative of perfectly distinguishing between the sheep and the goats, and we may shut out from this blessed ordinance many a true child of his, averse, through a gracious sensibility, from discovering to any minister or any church the inward things which have been honestly laid before the Saviour. Nor is it easy to see why Christians should be so much less open in their enjoyment of this ordinance than of many others. In admitting others to sing with us the praises of the Lord, we admit them to that, which has also the form of brotherhood, and which also was part of the services of the last night. Besides which, it has been seen, as clearly as any spiritual work can be, that this ordinance has in many an instance been made a converting one: and it is self-evident, that the doctrine of close communion involves that of their being but one authorised constitution for the whole church

of Christ, amongst all people, nations, and languages, a doctrine already condemned as full of fallacy and danger. On the whole it may be concluded, that discipline in general should be maintained *more* by moral than by formal acts ; offenders being shamed and convinced by the powerful application of truth to their consciences : and in reference to the subordinate question of close and open *communion*, it may be concluded that it is well for a minister and for a church to say to all who will attend, “ take heed how ye communicate,” even as our Lord said, “ take heed how ye hear,” but that it is not well by any wiry regulations, to make too strict a fence around the table of the Lord of grace.

VIII. THE NATURAL DISLIKE TO A SIMPLE VIEW OF ORDINANCES. If the preceding observations on the sacraments and other ordinances of Christ are just, the difficulties of our subject have been cleared away. Yet on this very account, (as intimated near the commencement of this work,) they may be unacceptable to the

hearts of some. There is in Virgil a line in which he describes one as seeking through the shades of death the light of the sun, and groaning when it was found; "*Quæsivit cœlo lucem ingemuitque repertâ.*" It is thus with too many in the matters of the kingdom of Christ. We would not attribute it altogether to that lust of priestly dominion which, before popery, showed itself in the hyperboles of Chrysostom, (*n*) and since the Reformation, still strives for a place in all our hearts. This, no doubt, has aided in its production. But as the evil exists amongst the laity, as well as amongst the clergy, we must inquire for a more general cause. And this general cause we find at once in the natural aversion of the human heart from any direct intercourse with God. The veil must be on every thing that comes from Him, or reflects his glory; all must be wrapped in the twilight of mystery, or the light, as from the face of Moses, becomes too strong. Hence the dislike to simplicity of conception; hence the strange perversions of the plainest truths; hence a dis-

position to attach an idea of *meanness* to any view which brings prominently forward the *fitness* and the *intelligibility* of the divine appointments. Yes! the apostolic declaration, that the "carnal mind is enmity against God," when properly considered, will instantly reveal the reason why, when God has spoken to us in our own tongue, when He has instituted certain means to bring us to the truths thus spoken, and when He has attached to those means certain signs to *make his meaning more conspicuous*, man upon his part uses his utmost ingenuity to screen the light, thus given, from his soul. This will also explain how it is that ecclesiastics have continually obtained power, even amongst proud and keen-eyed men, to interpose the church, as an abstract generality, between them and their God. Men do not indeed love to have their bodies or their minds chained up, but they do love that God should not shine on them with unintercepted light.

But is not this self-sought and self-created darkness *especially* unworthy of any one



who bears the Christian name? As Plato taught of old, so the learned Brahmins now have one system for themselves and another for the people (Bjornstjerna, p. 41); the Roman augurs are described as laughing when they met, at the credulity of the people taught to believe that the doom of empires could be averted or made known by driving a nail into a post, or examining the liver of an animal; and the sceptic Gibbon has said that religious rites *ought* to be unmeaning.

But we! Are we not worshippers of One of whom, in all the sublimity and grandeur of simplicity, it has been written "God is light," and "God is love?" Do we not walk by that truth, which was preached to the poor; and with regard to which it was promised, that the wayfaring man should not err? Are not, we would ask with emphasis, the doctrines and precepts of our faith distinguished from those of earth-grown creeds by the palpable manner in which they illustrate the glory of God, and advance the good of man? Is not Christ

the one clear, obvious medium of the love of God? And do we not expect a heaven in which there will be no clouds nor shadows, nor even any types or symbols, but in which we shall see "face to face?" If these things are so, are we not to believe that our rites and ordinances have a tendency to edification, no less direct, and are no less open to the eye of intelligence than our general opinions and duties? Undoubtedly! To impose is the great end of every mystagogue, to enlighten was the end of the divine "Author and finisher of our faith." And as a sword cuts only when drawn from its scabbard, and as the sun ripens all beneath it most rapidly when unclouded, so when the meaning of religious services is best understood, we may expect them to be most effectual. When any one, rich or poor, young or old, perceives how, in the ordinances of preaching and reading, the end is, that his own mind be aroused and his own conscience quickened; how in those of praying and praising, the end is, that his affections be kindled whilst God is

honoured; how in those of baptism and the Lord's Supper, the end is, that his attention be the more fixed to the peculiar blessings given and sealed to him of God, whilst he before the world glorifies God in his acceptance of them; then is such an one on the wing to high improvement. The animal that is made subservient to man, understands nothing of the art or instruments of him, by whom it is ruled; the common earth yields its fruit unconscious of the mind exerted in its cultivation, but the spirit of man meets with the Spirit of his Maker, in the "reasonable services" inculcated for the restoration of his image, and grows thereby.

We urge these remarks the more on account of their universal applicability. Mysteries, arising from the infinitude of that God "with whom we have to do," and from the depth and intricacies of his operations, will remain for ever to awe and elevate our minds; but the bewildering mysteries which arise from man's corrupt imaginations cannot be too quickly or too completely dissi-

pated. It is thus that, in the animated words of the learned Gale, (Part ii. p. 275,) "The Christian religion keeps herself in her own native beauty and virgin simplicity." Nay more, it is thus that the glory of God, as "THE FATHER OF LIGHTS," is consistently maintained: for unsearchable as He is in himself, He is still all communicative according to the capacities of his creatures, and the *appropriateness* of his communicating means is their glory and his own.

IX. THE OPERATION OF THE HOLY GHOST IN THE ORDINANCES. Some may perhaps fear or feel that, in this simplification of the ordinances, too much is made of human and too little of divine agency and influence. Most cordially do we welcome such an apprehension; at the same time, that we declare its groundlessness. In all things earthly and heavenly, be it observed, man is used by God as an instrument of good to his brother-man and to himself. And in our present subject, be it observed also, we are not opposing utility and edification to the power of God's gracious Spirit,

but to the unhealthy influence which our own fanciful notions have upon ourselves and others. This latter influence is indeed often unduly *sought* for, and sought for as a *substitute* for the former. Here men of schools, apparently the most different, stand on the same level. That Romish Priest dramatically officiating in his gorgeous cathedral is, in this point of view, twin brother to yonder rude enthusiastic Protestant, who with his poor companions and in his humble cottage, is physically quickening his pulse, till he believes himself filled with God. And every sentiment and practice, akin to theirs, act in the same manner, though not in the same degree. Not thus does the Spirit of God descend. The judgment, the affections, the conscience are purified by its sway, and brought into a state of healthy strength. The movements excited and invented by man himself are far lower than the blind instincts of irrational and irresponsible creatures: but *the movements occasioned by the Spirit of God strengthen man's reason by freeing it from*

*the bias of corrupt inclination.* In this condition man sees things as they are, and thus, to return to our own specific subject, he sees the fitness of the means God has given him for his spiritual amelioration; he admires, he rejoices in that fitness; yet he is not by any confusing halo prevented from regarding them as *mere means*, and thus delayed or misled in his pursuit of the substantial blessings they are intended to convey. It was thus that in Judaism a people were prepared for the Lord. Believers such as Anna, Elizabeth, Simeon, Mary, and Joseph walked in the ordinances of God "blameless;" because, being led by the Spirit, they walked with God and saw in them *his end*, the foreshadowing of Christ. And all the *genuine* triumphs of *genuine* Christianity have been gained in the use of machinery, which was extremely simple, yet *divinely blessed*. Christianity took the field against the intellectual and physical force of the world with a material as plain as the objects of her warfare were immense. She did not go forth as Judaism, in the form of a rigid economy, to

“cast out the heathen,” (Psalm xxx.) and thus make room for her own vine. Nor, however beautifully Hooker may dream the contrary (389 fol.) did it concern her in what form she found the governments of the world. She went forth to pervade all kingdoms, a spirit and a power of peace and light. She had nothing to delude, nothing to terrify, nothing to attract the *senses* of mankind. *Visible* she was by the very brightness of her heavenly peculiarities, but she was visible without being *ostentatious*. She had nothing and did nothing “for effect;” all around her was the majesty and the quietness of truth. Thus, under the smile of God, as gentle and as pure as the rain-drops of spring, her spirit sank into the earth, and thus we may say of her temple as of Solomon’s, that it arose in silence, “like some tall palm.”

X. THE CHARACTER OF THE ORDINANCES HARMONIOUS WITH THAT OF ALL THE WORKS OF GOD. The foregoing delineation of the ordinances of the church of Christ, has been drawn after a careful review of all that the Scriptures tell us concerning them. Let

it be now considered whether it is not consistent with all that we know of God and of his works? It is indeed the "glory of God to conceal" the future things of his *providence*, for thus He baffles the wise and frees the faithful from anxiety. But, having given his servants certain means to use in their spiritual cultivation of the world, would it have been *like Him* to have made them incomprehensible as to their use, or cumbrous as to their management? He, who compresses the germinating matter in the small compass of a seed, that it may be easily sown and easily covered with the soil; He, who gives the creatures of the deep their wedge-like form and close armour of scales, that they may plough their way with ease; He, who instructs the labourer "to discretion" and teaches him to make *his instruments* (Isa. xxviii. 26.) as *light* to the hand and as *fit* for their purposes as possible, whether they thus please the eye or not; He, *consistently with all his other acts*, has directed his church to employ simple and intelligible ordinances in all its spiritual



operations. Without needlessly giving any provocation, without needlessly challenging public attention His church *had* to vivify the social body of the Roman empire, and impress saving truths on the hearts of princes and of slaves : and *now*, without bewildering the mind by attracting it unduly to the form of the engines by which it works, it *has* to give as clear a view, as it can, of Christ, to the youngest, poorest, and most ignorant. But of old the church swerved from the mind of God, and exposed itself to calumny by the affected mysteriousness of its sacramental terms (Fleury M.D.C.xv); then the power and health and beauty of Christianity sank beneath the weight of Rome's ceremonial gauds; and now there is a disposition to put the instrument for the end, the apparatus for the fruit. May then the grace of God cleanse and illuminate our conceptions, that the vanity of man being dispelled, the glory of God may be more distinctly seen in all He has ordained; then will our wilderness blossom as the rose and its fragrance be borne far and wide below, and wafted to the gates of heaven above.

## THE VISIBILITY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

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I. The idea to be attached to "Visibility" when *Communities* are spoken of. II. The Visibility of the Church of Christ a noble and important subject. III. One great cause of error concerning it. IV. Three divisions in our subject; the moral, the administrative, and the material Visibility of the Church of Christ. V. The moral Visibility of the Church of Christ. VI. The administrative Visibility of the Church of Christ. VII. The material Visibility of the Church of Christ. VIII. The bearing of this subject upon that of an *established* Church. IX. The bearing of it upon that of external differences amongst various Christian communities.

I. THE IDEA TO BE ATTACHED TO "VISIBILITY" WHEN COMMUNITIES ARE SPOKEN OF.  
The visible church is a term of general

currency, and like every other term familiar to our lips and ears, is frequently unaccompanied by any distinct idea. The title of our subject, "The Visibility of the Church of Christ," is, of course, a kindred term and similarly circumstanced. This essay must therefore necessarily be opened with some remarks designed to define and clear up the strict and proper sense in which the terms "visible" or "visibility" should be used, when communities of any kind are the subjects of conversation or discussion.

A long and elaborate argument would here, however, be quite out of place; for the truth *presents itself* to the mind almost as soon as the attention is fixed upon *this point*, that when "the church of Christ" is spoken of, a *community* or *association* is spoken of. It is then immediately perceived and felt, that the visibility of such a thing as a community cannot be like the visibility of such a thing as the sun, or the human face; there being simply this in common between the two visibilities, that they are both the *manifestation* of the thing in

question to general observation. But the manifestation of the sun or the human face is the manifestation of the form, the brightness, and the colour of those objects ; whereas the manifestation of a community is the manifestation of its spirit, and its character, its constitution, and its aims. It is further to be observed, that a community has its *proper and distinctive* visibility, when the points which it presents to the public eye *fairly and plainly* express what it really is. If its rules and aims of action are kept *within itself*, it cannot be said to be generally visible : and much less can it be said to be so when its outward demonstrations, advisedly or unadvisedly, have been so made as to suggest an erroneous idea of what it really is or ought to be within. The many secret political societies, which have arisen at various times in all countries, and have been most rife in Ireland, Italy, and France, are instances of the first : various religious associations, as the Greek and the Roman Catholic churches, are, to a considerable extent, instances of the second.

Visible churches of course the latter are, but *so far* as they are unchristian in form and practice, they are not visible churches *of Christ*, but simply those of Greece and Rome : and although they may be, without impropriety, *spoken* of as being, in a popular sense, visible churches, it would be well that they should not so be *thought of* without the mind being habituated thus to rectify its conception.

II. THE VISIBILITY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST A NOBLE AND IMPORTANT SUBJECT. The end of the present essay is the elucidation of that genuine visibility, which it becomes the church of Christ to wear before the world. That this subject is a noble and important one cannot be denied. For the true characteristics of the church of Christ ought to be nothing less than a transparent medium of humanity, rendering the glory of its divine Lord observable by human eyes and minds. Christ, by his word and grace, makes believers, and believers taken collectively constitute his church : and thus those excellencies of his church, which

are palpable to the world, are so many illustrations of himself. "The *heavens* declare the glory of God, and the *firmament* sheweth his handy work;" *men*, rational and immortal men, wretched and sinful though they may be, give a yet higher testimony to "the power and Godhead" of Him, whose "offspring" they are; but *Christians* give a far richer light, when viewed as peculiar individuals, and one richer still, when viewed as a collective body. How much depends then upon the church giving out all its pure and native genius! Invisible to all as Christ is in his nature, unintelligible to the many, as He may be in his offices, his church, by its specific goodness, partially explains and commends His. In the manner that a machine shews *something* of its contriver, a code of laws of its framer, a farm of its cultivator, a kingdom of its governor, and a family of its father, so by all that is *evidently* valuable in itself does the church of Christ proclaim the worthiness of its Lord. It is a breathing, moving, living

comment upon his Gospel; a comment which is diversified, extended, and pointed more and more, according to the increase of the church in numbers and in purity. Unbelief is not indeed justified, when the professing church of Christ, by its inappropriate exterior, conceals or misrepresents the glory of Him, whose expression it should be; for even then, the Gospel, were it consulted, would be the faithful mirror of his majesty and grace. Nevertheless that vitiated church loses the blessedness it might enjoy, were it, in this respect, duly fulfilling one great end of its being called into existence.

Nay, more! When the professing church begins to lose its proper visibility, it not only ceases to do good, but it begins to do evil. It begins to corrupt both those who are within and those who are without. It is no longer salt to season, and light to guide; it taints and it misleads. The simple ones within its pale are steeped in a sensual and imaginative religion, and the acute ones without are confirmed in their

scorn and infidelity. God *may* overrule and continually has overruled the errors of men; nevertheless, it is generally true, that pure results can be only achieved by pure means: and the Scriptures and profane history coincide in teaching us, that many wise and some good men have occasioned lamentable evils by not keeping this principle in sight. Alas! for any Christian body, when its chiefs become infected with the notion, that to be effectual in the world, it must meet the natural taste of the world half way! Alas for it, when it thinks, that in order to be a "city set on a hill," an epistle "known and read of all men," and "the woman clothed with the sun," it must use the arts and assume the charms of mystery, pretension, and display! In the employment of such methods it is not Christianity that it stamps upon its recipients; the clearness of the die has been destroyed, and the image of Christ disfigured. It may, indeed, appear at first to triumph, as the Jesuits thus did in China; but the *triumph itself* is not



*that of truth*, and it is besides evermore attended by this loss, that by the Voltaires of the age essential Christianity is itself made answerable for the misdeeds of its propounders.

III. ONE GREAT CAUSE OF ERROR CONCERNING THE VISIBILITY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST. It has been already noted that wise and good men have undeniably gone astray, and with themselves deluded others. Gregory the Great may be not injuriously referred to, as illustrating this assertion. (*n*) Possessed with the desire of increasing, establishing, and perpetuating that influence of his church, which he undoubtedly desired and expected to be universally beneficial, he patronised the most doubtful means of acting. He taught his church the arts of gaining and keeping men by those appliances to their senses and imaginations, of which the ultimate effects are always corrupting and debasing. He strove indeed to raise the standard of morality both amongst the clergy and the laity: but he did not perceive what fruitful seeds

of evil lay hidden in those rules of unchristian austerity, in those ceremonies of unchristian splendour, and in *those concessions to the natural idolatry of the heart*, which he preposterously defended by the *abstract truth*, that it is "one thing to adore an image, and another to learn from an image what is to be adored." But whence proceeded the error of Gregory? And whence proceeds the error of those, who in his place and with his mental power would have done as he did? Whence, in short, proceeds the error of all, who think and feel that for Christianity to be effective, it must be manifested in an externally imposing and optically captivating and striking form? It proceeds not merely from the fact that there is a secret mistrust of the fitness of the Gospel to man in every condition, and of the power of divine grace over every heart; it proceeds not merely from an ignorance of the beauties of that "new creation" which the effectual working of the Holy Spirit produces in every renovated heart and life; but it proceeds also from a forget-

fulness, or is at least attended with a forgetfulness, that humanity, however fallen, has still *affections*, still a *conscience*, still a *mind*. Were this remembered, it would be discerned that to these affections, this conscience, this mind, Christianity in its utmost simplicity may make appeals as forcible as they are direct, without any disguise of its own character or compromise of its essential principles. When apostolic Christianity went forth, as an angel of light and life, to waken up the nations, it never worked upon the *senses* nor upon the *imaginative faculties* of man. This *had* been the method of the effete superstitions, which fell before it. It employed no peculiar dress, it reared no gorgeous temples, it paraded no trains of priests, it used no extraordinary gestures, it exhibited no mystically complex rites. No ! Its ministers spoke, and looked, and moved in a plain artless way ; as mortal men in every thing but in the mercy they enjoyed and the grace which had made them good ; and by their *very freedom* from the chicanery by which the baseless structures

of former systems were craftily clouded, they touched more closely the affections, the consciences, the minds of their fellow-creatures. They did not indeed thus convert them ; conversion is the work of Christ alone ; but they did thus arouse the world to listen to his voice. In regarding *their* character, the eyes of men were arrested and led onward to look at His. Then was the church arrayed in its most glorious and operative visibility. And in such a visibility as this should every Christian be desirous for his church to grow ; according to our Lord's parables of the mustard seed, and the leaven, and according to Daniel's figure of the little stone which in time became a verdant mountain and filled the earth.

IV. THREE DIVISIONS IN OUR SUBJECT, THE MORAL, THE ADMINISTRATIVE, AND THE MATERIAL VISIBILITY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST. Of these three divisions the *first* includes all that is generally perspicuous in the *manners, labours, and sufferings* of the church of Christ, the second all that is so in

its *constitutional laws and services* ; and the third all of it that is literally visible to the eye, as its *edifices and vestments*. The *moral visibility* is placed first, because it is *immutably independent of circumstances* ; and *because what is administrative and material exists only for the sake of what is moral* ; the *administrative visibility* is placed next, because the character of the church of Christ may be greatly evinced in this way, though not so fully as in the former ; and the *material visibility* is placed last, because it can hardly be said to be essentially necessary to the church of Christ at all. Under each of these three divisions, it is to be discussed, not how the church of Christ or the body which professes to be that church *may* make itself visible, but how it *should* do so consistently with its calling, which is to draw men not to itself, but to Christ and to his Gospel. (2 Cor. iv. 5.)

V. THE MORAL VISIBILITY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST. The *moral visibility* of the *church of Christ* is the *peculiar* and the *chief* beauty of it. *Superstition* had no

*moral visibility*, it made its presence known by external rites, which lulled the consciences whilst frequently they indulged and aggravated the worst passions of the heart. *Philosophy* was scarcely better, self-satisfied dogmatism and vain curiosity were its prominent characteristics; *poetry* too continually gilded vice, and made religion a thing of taste, until the force of Christianity laid open to its eye the inward springs of human action. (n) The world by wisdom “knew not God,” and all the systems by which it sought that its state might be ameliorated added little to its happiness, because they added little to its virtue, in some points, indeed openly promoting the works of hell. But the moral bearing of Christianity is direct and universal; not only does its every doctrine and every ordinance tend to edification, but that edification is produced throughout the *whole circle* of our relationships and circumstances, with their attendant duties. In proportion as we are made true believers, we are made good men, good husbands, good wives, good masters, good

servants, good governors, good subjects; we are made good in thought, in feeling, expression and behaviour; good in joy and sorrow, life and death. As we grow in Christianity we grow in that form of humanity which God designed for us. "Christ reformed the world," says Origen, "and filled it with virtues unknown before:" yes, He did so; but never be it forgotten, that all these virtues were the *appropriate flowers and fruits* which throughout all its extended ramifications God created humanity to bear. In the degree then, that the church of Christ becomes Christian, it makes its mightiest appeal to the world for its adhesion by presenting to it the *best models* of men, women, and children, rich and poor. True indeed it is, that the most perfect Christians have been the worst used men; true that Pliny condemned them for obstinacy, that Lucian laughed at their unbounded love, that Julian sneered at their zeal; true that their Lord was crowned with thorns, and his ministers treated as the off-scouring of all things; yet is it no less true,

that genuine Christian morality is *invariably* felt, and *continually* efficacious, even whilst the object of affected scorn, and real hatred to the slaves of passion, interest, or pride.

“How far that little candle casts its beams,  
So shines a good deed in a naughty world,”

is a distich which may be well applied to the conspicuousness of any pure demonstration of Christian gentleness, kindness, truth, mercy, integrity, holiness, and piety ; for the world cannot but notice the symptoms of qualities *unlike its own*, and cannot but inwardly revere the unique blessedness and fitness of a Christian life.

Every professing Christian community ought therefore to look carefully to this visibility of the manners as being the one which is in itself most effective in making a just impression, and which is most generally owned by God. It is not by loud declamations, or by descriptions of our *feelings* that the world is silenced ; it is mainly by setting before it that which is palpably sub-



stantial. Nor is it by attempting to overawe it by such physical austerities, such punctilious ritualism, and such pathic insensibility, as the Fakirs, the Pharisees, and the Stoics have excelled in: for this is not an improvement of *men as men*, this is not a reflection of the glory of Jesus, it is a distortion and a mutilation of man with regard to his social adaptations, it is a vain proclamation of individual peculiarity.

But as generally in its manners, so particularly in its labours, may the church of Christ, and Christ by His church, be seen. The labours of the world are indeed incessant. There is no sea, no land which does not witness them, no power of body or of mind unengaged in them. And some of the successes gained by these labours, both in art and science, are almost dazzling. The invention of writing and printing, by which we may declare our thoughts to ages and regions the most distant, the discovery of the weight, path, and speed of a planet which the naked eye cannot see; what wonders are here! And yet from the labours of

the world the labours of the church should ever stand out in bright relief. Consider the effects produced, the means used, and the objects aimed at in the former. As to the *effects*, no doubt they have extended the range of our bodily and mental enjoyments; but they have provided no adequate or transmuting remedy for our ills: nay, it is too sure that *new* ills within and without, private and public, are wakened into life by every new step of civilization. As to the *means*, the more quiet pursuits of some, (say mechanists, philosophers, and scholars,) do not necessarily involve *much* risk or collision with their fellow creatures. They therefore are not in a situation to be in any respects compared with the devoted labourers of the cross. But look at men in the more arduous fields of human exertion, look at statesmen, warriors, and great adventurers. Take one of the noblest amongst them, take a Columbus, and compare the means *he* used with those used by a Swartz or by an Elliott. That glorious man well knew that his followers would never cross the strange At-

lantic without congenial inducements. He therefore bewitched them with those dreams of gold and honour, in the realization of which the ocean was afterwards spotted for seventy leagues with Indian corpses, and a continent in less than fifty years was made the grave of its innumerable children. As to the *objects* for which the world prosecutes its labours, a sentence will be sufficient. At the best they are earthly and temporary; frequently of doubtful utility even in this life; and not seldom miserably fallacious or abominably bad. Consider now the labours of the church of Christ: if they are what they *ought to be*, they cannot but be universal and plain in their demonstrations. In truth, if the effects of *pure* (distinguished as it is easily distinguishable from spurious) Christian activity, be even carelessly observed, they must be admired. The effects are so great and so beautiful, they can no more be disparaged than the blooming renovations of a genial spring. Beneath the influence of this activity men begin to *feel* and proceed to *think*; the thirst of blood and the

love of sloth give way to the love of human kind and to honest industry with all its ingenious transformations ; woman rises into her due sphere of honour ; the slave drops his bodily and mental fetters ; the sick man is borne into the hospital, and the child led to the school ; physical difficulties are almost miraculously surmounted, and the deaf hear by their eyes, the blind read with their hands. Beneath the influence of this activity, whilst superstition and its blighting powers die away, science is invigorated, arts are quickened, law is humanised, social life is purified and sweetened, liberty and order and knowledge walk forth hand in hand, and the world of man throughout its complicated relationships is vitally regenerated. Such *effects* as these are *apparent* though imperfectly produced ; but, were the church of Christ more pure, and consequently more effective, they would be far more apparent, they would clothe it with a just and noble visibility. And the *means* and *objects* of Christian labourers ought no less palpably to bear the stamp of heaven ; the *means*, not

those of *force*, *fraud*, or *display*, but those of patience, integrity, and pure devotedness, the objects, not those of *self-interest*, but those of universal love. The *goodness* of truly Christian means and objects is certainly perceptible to the whole human multitude. If there be an individual or a community acting diligently, and consistently in the use and the pursuit of them, it is acknowledged to be a sacred spectacle. Envy and hatred may indeed be excited by the very distinctness of the lesson which is afforded: but even *thus* its distinctness is attested. And in many an instance the testimony will be most precious. How many a heathen's heart has, under God, given way, upon a growing appreciation of a faithful missionary's aim and proceedings! The Caffre and the Hottentot have been melted into Christians, through a conviction of the pure zeal of those who "brought them the great word over the deep sea water;" and the North American Indian has been changed, by being persuaded of the guileless character of the white teacher who

slept peacefully beneath his spear. And in civilized life, also, men of sceptical minds have often been powerfully touched in a like way. Proof against all high ecclesiastical pretensions, they have often at least been silenced by the sight of a beloved child or wife dying in the enjoyment of a hope, which was instilled by some faithful friend or minister: the substantial greatness of whose Christian objects and operations has been then confessed.

But the church of Christ is also most luminously visible in its *sufferings*. Man indeed inflicts them in hope of driving her to darkness; but God overrules them, that the lustre of the gold may be more clear. Persecution has, it is true, been sometimes permitted so to prevail, as that an unworthy people should be left without the truth it hated. Still this very persecution has been the cause of bringing out from the church of Christ, a lustre which has shone downwards to the remotest generations. Even now is there a voice in the blood of Abel; even now does the face of Stephen

beam like an angel's; even now do the chains of the Apostle Paul, (the moral brightness of which at the time eclipsed Nero's glory in his own palace, (Phil. i. 13,) glisten before our eyes; even now do the martyrs of Rome, within the inquisition of Spain, or amongst the precipices of Piedmont, make the true church visible in spite of all the meretricious obscurations of Papal Rome. And what are the *peculiar* qualities observable in the sufferings of the church of Christ, and dividing them from the sufferings of fanatics, or of heroes, or of men in general? These qualities are a *disinterested perseverance*, which is seen only in those who continue their work because they love it, though in worldly things they lose by it; a *fidelity to truth*, which prevents them from accommodating it to the tastes of the world, as Justin (Ad Græ. Coh.) says that Plato did, when “φοβῶ το κώνειον,” *for fear of the hemlock*, he disguised what he believed; a *cheerful and unostentatious satisfaction* in suffering for God, like that which Latimer felt, when con-

demned to the stake, he stood erect and glorified God for honouring him with such a death; and *an unaffected willingness* to forgive and bless those who may be the instruments of pain. The last is indeed the brightest grace amongst all, which crown a Christian church or a Christian individual, when injuriously exposed to bodily or mental evils. It was singularly radiant amongst the earlier Christians, who, whilst the Jews continually burst out into the most frantic insurrections, illustrated their better faith by the services they rendered their oppressors; (n) and it *should* be jealously preserved by all, who desire that the church of Christ should be known aright. This jealousy should indeed be exercised with regard to all the points of her *moral* visibility. The common custom of using the term "Christian" as one of the highest commendation, and "unchristian" as the reverse, evinces the strong self-declaratory power of Christian morals: and now that there are none of those miraculous gifts which once bespoke the divinity of our



faith, moving like the lamps in Ezekiel's vision amongst the wheels of its chariot, now that we have to act in so wide a theatre and before such keen observers, it increasingly behoves us to keep our garments well. "As the Father hath sent me so send I you:" Christ was the image of his Father; all the members of his church should strive to be *his* image: if not, vainer than the ceaseless roaring of the sea against the rocks will be our pretensions and our claims; the world will not be overcome by us; the power from on high will not bless us.

VI. THE ADMINISTRATIVE VISIBILITY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST. This branch of the subject parts itself into the two, which have been already indicated, that of the *constitutional* laws and that of the *services* of the church of Christ.

It would abridge the discussion upon both if we could with propriety and truth turn to the New Testament and say, "the church of Christ has had a fixed form appointed to it, and a fixed tribunal esta-

blished in it by its Lord." In this case it would only be requisite to unfold the perfections of what had been so fixed : and to press the most minute attention to it. There is, however, as previously intimated, no warrant for proceeding in this manner. One man may cling more to the idea of there being an *apostolical model*, and another to the idea of their being an *apostolical power* given to the church, to be handed down from generation to generation : but both ideas are baseless. The record gives *no imperative sentence* : not only is there no Evangelical Leviticus, but in the apostolic directions concerning matters of administration there absolutely appears to be a careful avoidance of all those terms expressive of perpetuity and endurance which are so frequent in the Old Testament, when the old covenant in respect of its form is spoken of. And yet having to introduce the more enduring Christian dispensation, the apostles would naturally, *had it been the Lord's will*, have employed like terms, only still more *frequent* or more *strong*, and not only so, but,

if possible, still more *full* and more *clear*. It is certainly very intelligible, how some may love to *imagine*, that the church of Christ would be more efficacious, more united, and *more beautiful, as a consistent whole to the public eye* (which is our present concern), could it be exhibited with a fixed form or with a fixed authority. This imagination is however quite delusive. Worldly astuteness would quickly descry the unchristian character and the intrinsic evil of such a condition.

Take first the supposition of fixity. In form, Christianity avows itself (and oh, how intense a glory in this respect crowns it) to be a religion for *universal humanity*; it avows itself to be a religion of *essential principles*; it avows itself to be a religion *appointed to outlive every government and empire*, ending only here to be consummated in heaven! The world then could not but feel how unsuitable to its character would be an inflexible mechanism.

Again; the Jewish ritual was drawn out by Jehovah in a way, that though it might be

abused, neglected, or practically adulterated, its literal injunctions could by a Jewish child be hardly misunderstood: and if a divine ritual was designed to be given to the church of Christ, why should it be given with less perspicuity? If given at all, it would have undoubtedly been given explicitly; for according to all analogy salvation would only be attainable within its circle; and according to the constant declarations of our Lord, *his religion was to be distinguished for its openness to the unlearned, the poor, and the young*. The world could not but be also open to such thoughts as these.

The fact is, indeed, that notwithstanding the loud arguments of competing sects, Christianity *has* on all sides in many points moulded itself to circumstances. The Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons of our day, found as they are in *several* communities, are principally connected with those of a former day by their *names*: the primitive arrangements are *no where* now. The deaconesses, so necessary when women were

secluded and distrusted, the presbyteries, so necessary to watch over the temporal as well as spiritual affairs of nascent individual churches, the inspired apostles, so necessary to plant Christianity and give it its right direction ; these and other “ ancient things ” have disappeared : in some instances it is impossible to replace, in others absurd to imitate them.

Take next the supposition of fixity in authority that is in delegated authority. In what kind of light would the maintenance of this principle *set Christianity before the public mind* ? In a light the most unworthy of it, *unless it could be also demonstrated that purity and infallibility resided always with such delegated authority*. For *otherwise* it would be too conspicuously evident that, according to their own rules, Christians might be obliged to accept of any false and blasphemous interpretation of their Scriptures, AND THAT WITHOUT ANY LEGITIMATE POWER OF RECOVERING THE TRUTH. Granted, that this dilemma is sometimes

evaded, by saying, "we can appeal to the authorities who went before:" but this appeal is entirely irreconcilable with the *position taken up*. If there be such a delegated authority in the midst of us, that authority is the *final* interpreter of the Scriptures, which are the superior lights, and of all preceding judgments too, which are the inferior ones; *so that direct scriptural authority, and delegated apostolical, can never co-exist*. In the same manner it would, upon the briefest inspection, be universally obvious, that the existence of a fixed delegated authority, *without a fixed purity and infallibility*, involves the possibility of the whole official body of the church of Christ becoming inefficient and vitiated *without there being any legitimate means of redress*. "Like loves like;" corrupt possessors of authority will naturally choose corrupt successors, and when this is done, not a step can the church of Christ take to rectify the evil, if it *upholds consistently the notion of a fixed delegated authority*.

These two ideas being then dismissed, a

few plain principles may be stated, as tending, when acted out, to give the church of Christ a suitable visibility in its constitutional laws and services. All of these principles depend upon the two apostolical directions, "*Let all things be done decently and in order,*" and "*Let all things be done unto edifying.*" (1 Cor. xiv.)

The first principle is, that there should be *some ministerial organization*. In certain respects this is more necessary *now*, than during the time of the apostles. For both order and edification were in those days provided for by the extraordinary gifts and consequent authority of the apostles themselves. But the want of these extraordinary gifts as to power, knowledge, and utterance, must now be supplied by men being so set apart and freed from worldly avocations, that by study and by practice they may be apt, and by their manner of life may be ready for all the varied agencies of religion and of benevolence. The necessity for this is so obvious, and the accomplishment of it is so

analagously consistent with all the divisions and subdivisions which the world makes of its labours and professions, that it cannot but assent to its propriety. Indeed when the apostle says that they who "preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel," he establishes the propriety of the ministry being a distinct profession. The second principle is, that in forming this organization, care be taken that the ministerial class be not too much isolated. This isolation admits the mists of superstition into the temple of truth, and causes a general obstruction to its fair proportions being seen. Besides which, it not only raises in the shrewd observer an immediate suspicion of priestcraft, but certainly, in process of time, engenders it. Whilst then the church of Christ strives to furnish itself with an intelligent and well-trained ministry, it should never arm them with regulations by which they could formally forbid other persons from exercising their talents. This did not Moses; this did not the apostle Paul; this did not our blessed



Lord. (Numb. ii. 29. Phil. i. 8. Mark ix. 39.) Having furnished those whom they have specifically chosen for their offices with *more leisure* and *more means* than other men for acquiring a due meetness for their discharge; having provided for the peaceful progress of their public worship, the church of Christ should never entirely check within itself the free labours of its various members, but rather instruct its ministers to stimulate the useful and repress the useless by the brightness of their own examples. The third principle is, that the services should be fixedly arranged, with regard to *time, place, and manner*. It was impossible that they should be so arranged when Christianity dawned upon the world. Not being protected, but oppressed by the magistrates of the empire, and having their congregations composed, in part, of children with unbelieving parents, slaves with unbelieving masters, and wives with unbelieving husbands, any thing very methodical in their worship must have been unattainable. God has, however, spread over us the canopy

of legislative favour ; and of this we should undoubtedly avail ourselves : endeavouring so to order it that as many as possible may understand *where, and when, and wherefore* the fold of Christ is opened to them, and that whilst no principle of Christianity is violated, no conventional usage of social life be needlessly infringed. The fourth principle is, that these determinate arrangements be never idolized. When peculiar opportunities present themselves, they should be gladly seized, as were, by the apostles, the opportunities of preaching the Gospel at the feasts, and in the synagogues of the Jews. And when prescribed methods do not suit peculiar cases, and others are found more profitable, the former should be laid by, at least for a time. For an illustration of this remark, a glance may be given to some of the more crowded districts of England's populous cities ; those thick entangled forests of vice and sorrow. It has been found again and again that the erection of an elegant church, and the introduction of our chaste and noble liturgy, are

means (although as far as they go, well suited for the presentation of Christianity to classes already somewhat refined,) almost ineffectual *there*. The highways and hedges cannot be thus explored: poverty has its shame, as wealth its pride; and if a fair and stately structure invites some, it certainly repels many. Suppose, then, that instead of a beginning being thus attempted, *several* light and airy chambers were prepared both for the instruction of children and for *short* public services, might not more fruit be hoped for, and would not the *condescending*, and *sympathetic*, and *penetrative* character of Christianity be more touchingly maintained? The fifth principle is, that the church of Christ, in casting all its plans, permanent or temporary, should have before its eyes the magnificence of its appointed task. It is not to *civilize*, not to *proselyte*; it is to *convert*. Conversion is the *end* of all its labours: consistently with this, indeed, it may give many a help to civilization, and receive in return considerable benefit

by so doing; nevertheless it is for conversion that the church of Christ exists. This stamped upon its heart, will set the church upon making its services as pure in their matter as they are orderly and expedient in their arrangement. There will be an avoidance of all *false glosses* upon truth, and all *ambiguous expressions* of it. Openly at variance with this principle are several of the services of the church of Rome, and our own services might here and there be rendered more accordant with it, by being rendered more *simple* and *definitive* in language. There is amongst us a strong tendency to mistake unmeaning, mystical, and inflated terms for divine sublimity. Fleury reminds us that the church of Christ, in speaking *of* and *in* the sacraments, soon began to sin in this way, and thus gave some excuse to the gross misapprehensions and calumnies of the pagan faction. (*n*) But it is not by such terms that *the hearts* of men are reached, nor on such expositions of his truth that the blessing of God descends. The polar star of the Gos-

pel is not to be shewn through the prism of man's vain imagination; our services should be pure and simple vehicles of pure and mighty truth.

VII. THE MATERIAL VISIBILITY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST. Christianity certainly tends to produce what is agreeable to the eye, and through the eye to the mind, in things which are material. That moral evil is intimately and necessarily united with things material, is the doctrine not of Christianity but of Manicheism. God has himself created what is full of beauty, and He has given men the power of appreciating it. The beauty of Paradise was for Adam, not for the other animals; the glory of the firmament spoke to David, not to his flocks and herds. And as Christianity purifies and strengthens all the powers of man, this power is purified and strengthened with the rest. No warrant is, however, given by this fact to an accumulation of worldly decorations upon the church of Christ. This Leighton called, Christianity appearing in a "court mask," or rather like a cap-

tive at a Roman triumph in "a glistening slavery and captivity." And well might he so speak. For when Christianity shews itself in an external garb, which is *inappropriate to its character*, its beauty is not revealed, but hidden. It has not an air of freedom from the world, but of subjection to it. It is a sign of fealty to the prince of darkness, not of victory over him. It loses instead of gaining in beauty, to the judgment of every rational man. The beauty of the noblest of all the visible creations we are acquainted with, the human body, consists not only in its symmetry, and relative position, and specific form, but in its *expressive adaptation to the mind within it*. Nor in any case, with all the aids of lines and colours, to pure and unprejudiced intelligence can there be conveyed an idea of beauty, when the plan is obviously *not* adapted to the *purpose*. In discussing, therefore, the material visibility of the church of Christ, the object is to discuss *what in this way is most suitable to its genuine and essential nature*. This being

kept steadfastly in view, a few remarks may be made upon *processions, vestments, and edifices.*

*Processions* were greatly beloved by some of the ancient, and are so still by some of the modern heathens. The triumphal progress of the Roman conquerors to the temple of Jupiter, and the procession of Juggernaut and his car, are well known examples. But it certainly was not in this way that the heralds and ambassadors of Jesus Christ were made "a spectacle to angels and to men." The kingdom of God comes not with observation; and the slightest perception of its real spirit and real power will lead men to feel, that its most appropriate processions are those of cheerful children thronging to its schools, and of serious and decent worshippers going up, in meeting and mingling streams, to the places of its assembling. These processions spring naturally from its operations; but whatever is *designed for show*, in the pageantries of Rome, and whatever is designed to gratify the pride by displaying the strength

of any party, in some of the gatherings among Protestants, should be judged to be no exhibition of Christianity, but the reverse. When they say "lo here," and "lo there," believe them not; nor are such demands upon public attention and homage generally accredited. The world, indeed, "loves its own," and it would of itself choose that the church of Christ should countenance it, by resembling it in all its ways. Nevertheless the world is often *taught*, by the very absence of the toys and idols in which it delights, as Pompey was, when, to his surprise, he found no image within the temple at Jerusalem, and as was the whole empire, when the Christian preachers proclaimed a faith without sacrifices, or sacrificing priests.(n)

*Concerning dress*, it may be remarked, that there are obvious advantages in *some* professional attires. The uniform of soldiers will be absolutely necessary, until war is learnt no more. They distinguish the soldier from the civilian, the English soldier from the French, and the soldier of



one regiment from that of another; they insure precision of movement and the immediate co-operation or separation of particular numbers of particular troops. There may be also a seemliness in a peculiarity of dress being adopted on public occasions, by great public officers, such as judges. The paraphernalia announce the nature of the business to be transacted; and the presiding persons are, to the promotion of good order, marked out from the rest. Upon this ground, the decent and unostentatious vestments of the English church appear defensible. Great stress should, however, never be laid upon them; for the original ambassadors of Christ wore nothing of the kind; and there attends them this disadvantage, that in a slight degree they may lend authority to error, when uttered by a person who is punctiliously appareled. When, however, *not in the congregation*, the disadvantages greatly predominate over the advantages of a ministerial costume. The expected advantages are, that ministers would be

known at once, and that being so, they would be more circumspect, decorous, respected, and useful. But all experience, and all revelation shew, that not only must the benefits produced by *these* means be incomparably superficial, but that there are to be balanced against them many evils, some less and some greater. Amongst the less are to be ranked the presentation of new opportunities for perpetrating frauds; the exposure of the ministers to ridicule, unless their dress is *continually revised*, according to the usages of their day and generation; (n) a disposition amongst themselves to value one another according to their attention or inattention to these puerile minutiae; and the imposing, as Pope Celestin said, (Fleury, *Habits Sacrés*) upon the eyes of the foolish by a singular exterior. But the greater disadvantage arises from the demarcation thus made between the ministers and the people. "It is not good for a man to be alone," in the class, any more than in the sex, or in the individual. The class, which *moves by itself*, soon comes

*to move for itself.* And it is in the body of Christian ministers that this tendency is to be especially deprecated. The love of one's order is the love of an expanded, multiplied, and magnified self, and directly contrary to the comprehensive and ebullient spirit of the love of God. If, then, the lawyer, soldier, and sailor, mingle with their fellow subjects divested of their public insignia; if even in the Jewish church there were no divine laws for the vestments of the priests, *except when publicly engaged*, (Exod. xxxv. 19;) much less should there be any thing amongst Christians to tell the world that their ministers and their people are not brethren. The use of peculiar habits by *private* Christians is so universally discountenanced, that nothing need be said upon *that* use, except that matters of this nature (whether in the case of ministers when not officiating, or in the case of those who never officiate,) should be left, like the bloom of fruit, to be the result and the indication of a healthy state within. Christianity may be trusted alone: it in-

duces a love of genuine decency, a personal self-respect, and a habit not of attracting, but of gratifying others by all means that are pure and harmless. Christianity *has* continually, without formal regulations, affected the dress of its disciples ; its richer ones it has taught an unaffected meetness ; its poorer ones a cleanly propriety ; and its ministers it has led to adopt a style of dress which is not an *exclusive costume*, but which is the most quiet and unobtrusive of the styles which are used by the community at large.

In defining the species of *architecture*, which best becomes the church of Christ, there are two difficulties to be at once encountered. The first is, that God himself may appear to have established the abstract principle that architectural *splendour* is a fit means for promoting religion, and the second is, the power which the great edifices of past ages exercise over all our minds. No doubt in the temple of Solomon "beauty and glory" delighted the natural eye, whilst grace and mercy delighted the

eye of faith. And no doubt the edifices which arose in the hey-day of Paganism and Popery are to be ranked amongst the most extraordinary monuments of human genius. Most admirable were the marble temples of Greece and Sicily, backed by skies of clear blue, which beamed between their columns and relieved the distinct outlines of their well-proportioned roofs: and no less so, were the stone cathedrals of more northern Europe, the heaviness of their material being lightened, and the dulness of their colour broken up by their pointed arches and the endless varieties of their fretwork. All this is admitted: but it is also to be insisted on, that *notwithstanding this*, it is a palpable breach of sound taste, and of Christian principle, to take either the temple of Solomon, or the Greek temple or the Gothic cathedral as models for the structures of the church of Christ. Men will indeed gravely tell you that such or such an edifice is quite *correct* in style! But if it is *unsuitable*, what praise is this? An English court of justice built *correctly* in the man-

ner of a Chinese pagoda would possess as much merit as the Christian church built as a temple or cathedral. The fashion of the home should agree with the habits of the family. The fashion of the fold should agree with the wants of the flock. The temple of Solomon was intended by its form and services to act as a *material Gospel*, typically representing to all the world that into the heaven of heavens there could be no admission but by the blood of the great sacrifice: but when the antitype had come, and when the *literal Gospel* had been given, God, by the Roman firebrand and plough, completely did away with the temple, which had succeeded Solomon's; not permitting the new method of instruction to be interfered with by the old. The temples of classical antiquity were constructed with but little thought of *interior* accommodation; that was not the object aimed at in *them*, but in the theatres and amphitheatres. The Gothic cathedrals were raised for *seeing* more than for *hearing*; for the pavonian exhibition of ecclesiastical

spectacles, for peals of instrumental music, for the elevation of the host and the glory of the priesthood. It is thus obvious that neither in the temple of Judaism, which was ordained by Jehovah himself, nor in the temples of Paganism or Popery are there found the fit architectural models for the church of Christ. At the creation God gave to every animal an organization suited to its instincts and its faculties: the spirit of the eagle was not placed in the body of a dove, nor was the body of a bird animated by the longings or dispositions of a fish. And Christianity in some degree must be impeded and disguised by the use of an architecture not accordant with its soul.

Thus far *negatively* concerning this point: but some *positive* observations should be also made upon it. Before every thing else it should be noticed, that Christianity cannot consistently *wait* for peculiar structures of *any* kind. "Wait, wait" some will exclaim, "until you possess a building worthy of the doxology, 'Thou art the

king of glory, O Christ.' " Alas ! can it be possible, that the glory, of which Christ is king, should be thus misconceived ? Can it be imagined, what is almost blasphemy to suppose, that *He*, Jesus the crucified, has greater pleasure in garish windows, and foliated screens, and painted ceilings, than in the immediate fulfilment of his great and last command ? He gave to his beloved followers the glory which He had received of the Father, (John xvii. 22,) the glory of developing the riches of his goodness, and this glory lived around their brows, when by river sides, in prisons, and in hired houses as well as in synagogues and in the temple, they spoke of immortality, holiness, and salvation to every creature that bore the form of a man. *In the next place*, when Christianity has gained a footing, and acquired stability and extent, its children *should carefully consult its spirit and the spirit of its ordinances in the edifices erected for its use*. Christianity desires edifices, in which privacy and union may be both attained ; in which all may hear together, sing together, and pray to-



gether as in a paternal home. (n) It desires edifices, in which it may move freely, as in a congenial attire, in all the fulness of its character as being a religion of *thoughtful feeling*, not of mystic sensation ; as being one of revealed truth, not of pliant fiction ; and as being one which opens its arms to all mankind, without disturbing the mutual relations of society. *And thirdly*, in *applying these principles to the particulars of arrangement*, it would be found to follow from them, that its buildings being so constructed as to *distract the minds of its worshippers as little as possible*, whilst the freest scope was afforded to their due devotional exercises, no *great* innovation on the prevailing taste of the day should be attempted, that there should be nothing to *offend* and nothing to *excite* the senses, and that the wishes and habits of the population should be in a measure consulted and humoured. And thus in different countries and climates there would be considerable variations of manner ; for what might be convenient here, might be inconvenient elsewhere, and

what would be gorgeously attractive in one place might be repulsively mean in another. A church within the tropics, and one beyond the arctic circle, a church amongst the Bechuanas, and one amongst the noble inhabitants of West-London *ought* greatly to differ from each other. The leading idea, however, should never be infringed : as of a bird the heart is first formed, then the body, and then the plumage ; and as in a telescope the interior is blackened lest any cross reflections should confuse the image of the object passing to the eye, so in Christian architecture the spirit of Christian worship should be first consulted, nor should there be any thing admitted in the details to arrest the flight of that spirit towards God. This idea cannot be gainsaid, but in our own day it is continually *slighted*. Whilst in our bridges and all our engineering works we may justly claim the palm, our religious structures are most deficient in that kind of beauty, which they would abundantly possess, were they built with an

*enlightened knowledge of what was required for Christian worship.*

The fact is that there is nothing in which proud man delights more than in raising vast architectural monuments *to his own glory*; witness the emblazonments of the Percies and Vavasours, and W. of Wykeham's figure of himself together with that of the angel Gabriel. And pride is always blind. And thus Christianity has been *encumbered* with splendid piles which are more fit for *any service than for hers*, and whose *spiritual history* might well humble us by its *illustrations of fraud, superstition, vanity and self-righteousness*. And when one looks at these erections with a meditative eye, when one, for example, sees at Canterbury the spot whence the blood-drops of Becket the deified were taken to Rome, when one sees *his* chapel occupying the place of the holy of holies, when one sees the furrows worn in the stones by those who knelt to *him* as their protector, when one looks back and con-

siders that the sums of money here squandered might have fitted out many a missionary enterprise, when one reflects on the number of artless souls here confirmed in error by priestcraft and self-interest, when one notices that many even now are bewitched by the shadow of these walls, when, in short, one feels as one ought to feel, then grief, awe, and fear, overcloud every ray of pleasurable admiration. And as in contemplating the heartless bigotry and sensualism of the 14th and 15th Louises and their courts, you cease to wonder at the retributive reaction of the revolution, so in taking an honest and a comprehensive moral survey of these imposing structures, you cease to wonder at the desolating tempest which once swept over them. (*n*)

VIII. THE BEARING OF THIS SUBJECT UPON THAT OF AN ESTABLISHED CHURCH. Nothing has yet been said upon the question of national religious establishments. It is not necessarily connected with our subject, for whether *established* or not, the church of Christ must still be *visible*.

Nevertheless, our subject may be further illustrated, by this question being noticed here. In doing which, it must be prefaced that there is scarcely any question which has been more darkened by controversy than this. The true point of discussion has been seldom attended to by conflicting champions. It is simply this, *in what way and to what extent should Christianity and a state (that is, a kingdom in its political actings) be connected?* Somehow they must be connected. For the demands of Christianity upon states as well as individuals are *positive*, they must be accepted or rejected, and consequently there is *no neutral ground*. Before the Roman Empire *acknowledged* Christianity it *resisted* it: it did not, and it could not do otherwise. Even when upon the part of *Emperors* persecution slept, upon the part of the *Empire* opposition lived. How? Why, not only by its public idolatry, but by its laws concerning slaves incapacitating them to fulfil their duties to God and man, by its executive's disregard of the Christian day

of rest and worship, by the facility it gave to divorces on other grounds than those which Jesus sanctioned, and by its tacit yet general non-acceptance of the principles of Christianity as indices to the principles of all law. And in our own day it is proved that the entire separation and independent action of the Christianity and the Polity of a country cannot be carried out consistently. Even in America the state stops all its wheels upon the *Christian's* holy day, not upon the Jew's, not upon the Mahommedan's ; and it thus favours his faith, and degrades theirs. So there must *always* be some connection ; the state must co-operate with Christianity, or oppose it. It would be irrelative in this place to define the manner and extent of that co-operation, which must indeed in a measure vary with varying circumstances. There is, however, one point, which is closely associated with the main argument of our treatise. It is this ; every *state* being virtually the more powerful party in a country acting with, without, or against the will of the weaker party, and

Christianity being a religion, which seeks only for *willing* disciples, the utmost care should be taken to give no warrant to any spiritual arrogance or tyranny. No Christian statesman in a monarchy or a republic should proffer, and no Christian community should accept of aids likely to feed or to produce this spirit. When Cyrus, whose spirit Jehovah "stirred up," and when after him Darius (Ezra i. and vi.) rendered public aid to the Jews in their spiritual concerns, they did well. But not so did Nebuchadnezzar when (Daniel iii. 29,) he strove by menaces to drive his people into the worship of Jehovah. And the best friends of Christianity and of any Christian community are they, who decline receiving from the state any such legal assistance as would *compel* adherence, and who themselves refrain from using any but the *purest means* to acquire it. A church may be established by compulsion: *the church* cannot be so. *The church* should look around with the light and smile of a benefactress, not with the frown of an imperious and jealous

mistress. Should an Eastern Monarch *do his best* in providing wells or cisterns throughout some arid portions of his dominions, his name would justly be engraven on his country's mind : but should he at the same time give power to the keepers of those wells to enforce the use of them, should he command his people to use none but these, however brackish might be their water, and inconvenient their situation ; his folly and his tyranny would be confessedly on a level.

IX. THE BEARING OF THIS SUBJECT UPON THAT OF EXTERNAL DIFFERENCES AMONG DIFFERENT CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES. The formal dissimilarity observable amongst established and non-established Christian associations is a cause of vexation to many of really heavenly minds. They grieve that Christianity should not present a regular figure to the world in small things no less than in great.

*But, in the first place,* it may be asserted, that a simple statement of the manner in which this dissimilarity has arisen, would



do much to clear Christianity from this obscuratation, if Christians generally made it. For, are not the facts incontrovertible? During the time of the apostles a kind of uniformity was maintained throughout the whole Christian body, by *their* authority, sealed by the exercise of extraordinary gifts. This uniformity was also, both then and afterwards, promoted by the persecutions to which Christians were exposed until the time of Constantine. Episcopacy was, in part, the result of these circumstances. The apostles seem generally to have adopted the form of management usual in the Jewish synagogues, and from this episcopacy grew up after them, as a monarchy grows up in time of war. And even when the war had ceased, and the church of Christ had rest, the patronage of Roman emperors, and the style of Roman institutions confirmed its throne throughout the Roman world. But, in process of time, nominal Christianity became, under this government, no less impotent for spiritual purposes than it was

exquisitely organized for gaining worldly objects. The spirit of life, however, began to work in it, and it burst asunder. New ecclesiastical constitutions had then to be cast, by those who separated from Papal Rome; just as new political constitutions had to be fostered by the kingdoms which arose at the fall of Pagan Rome. They were variously modified, according to the will of the sovereign, and the views of the best teachers, affected by peculiar circumstances, which pressed very unequally in different places. Hence, after the Reformation, Christian communities openly appeared with distinctive features in respect of their economies, although, for the most part, there was a wonderful harmony in their confessions of faith. Subsequently to the Reformation other separations took place. They sometimes have been originated by the pettishness of passion, but at other times by the power of truth and the energy of grace, calling new systems into being to break the slumbers of the old.

Did but the members of the church of Christ agree in spreading this simple statement of facts before the world, how greatly lessened would be the world's disposition and ability to assail and mock it for its divisions. And to this statement might be added the following annotations. It might be remarked that nothing is more to be deprecated than that Christianity should be petrified in an idolatrous obeisance to uniformity: to prevent which, it may be judged, uniformity was, at the Reformation, *providentially* rendered almost as impracticable as Judaism was upon the destruction of Jerusalem, and expatriation of its people. It might also be suggested that, notwithstanding the evils arising from the contests of the *formal zealots of all parties*, the various social classes have been better reached by various agencies, than it is likely that they could have been by that of one unalterable character.

In *the second place*, a practical exhortation may be addressed to all who grieve for the divisions of the church of Christ,

and who, notwithstanding these views, *justly* believe that they are *attended* by much that must scandalize the world. It may be said to them, "Let it be admitted, that sin and folly have had their share in producing *some* of these divisions; still remains the question, which is the best way of acting with regard to them, in order that the church of Christ may be exhibited, or rather may reflect its Lord's image as fairly as possible? Is it by alleging extravagant claims in behalf of some one section of the general church? Is it by contending against the very note and token given by our Lord, "Ye shall know a tree by its fruits," and by asserting that whatever may be its good fruits, such a community *is not within the pale*, and whatever may be its bad fruits, such an one *can never be without it*? No. There is but one method of mitigating the *asperities* of the outlines which sever us. It is, to choose that community which, in the sight of God, you judge to be best for your own soul, and having joined it, to do your

utmost in there maintaining that truth which is the only chain along which the fire of life and light is conducted; and looking evermore beyond the instrument to its end, not to commend your choice by assumptions and denunciations, but by the lovely holiness of your conduct." It is not, indeed, maintained that, by professing Christians acting with this aim, all differences would be done away. The *desirableness* of that at present is very doubtful; because it is certain, that there is no one community fitted by its spirit or its organization to do the work of all. But it is maintained, that our very distinctions in opinion and in operation would more highly illustrate the force and spirit of those mighty principles which united us as brethren in different compartments of the same field; it is maintained, that Christianity would acquire a new persuasive charm, and that, in looking upon our UNITY IN DIVERSITY, the most wordly-minded man might be tempted to repeat, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and

thy tabernacles, O Israel; as the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the water." The world *laughs* at the thin veil of formalism, which self-interest holds up before it: but they who, under the grace of God, endeavour thus to act, will have done their parts in convincing the world that the church of Christ is that only association of rational creatures here, which is united within itself, in consequence of its being united with Christ, and through Him, with heaven and with God.

## THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

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I. The co-existence of the spiritual and the formal Church of Christ. II. The inability of man accurately to separate the spiritual and formal Church. III. The spiritual Church is, nevertheless, strictly speaking, the *only* Church of CHRIST. IV. Men may examine *themselves* whether they belong to it or not. V. The vitality of the spiritual Church of Christ. VI. The universality of the spiritual Church of Christ. VII. The advancement of the spiritual Church of Christ in knowledge, purity, and influence.

I. THE CO-EXISTENCE OF THE SPIRITUAL AND THE FORMAL CHURCH OF CHRIST. What is the unity, what are the ordinances, what is the visibility of the church

of Christ, these are the subjects which have occupied our attention. Under the divine blessing, they will prove any thing but driftless and empty speculations. Just views with respect to them cannot but impart a better tone to our thoughts and feelings, our wishes and prayers before God, and a better direction to that influence over the minds of others, which, in a greater or less degree, we *all* possess and exercise. Nor is this all; but it is also apparent, that the acquisition of a single right thinker upon *any* portion of truth is the acquisition of another stepping-stone, by which truth may advance, if such be the will of God, to its ultimate and universal triumph.

But the spirituality of the church of Christ is a subject, in some points, more evidently practical than either of the foregoing three. Concerning the unity, concerning the ordinances, concerning the visibility of the church of Christ, should a man maintain right opinions, his own conduct being wrong, he must have a very



lethargic conscience. But concerning the spirituality of the church of Christ, if he maintains what is good, and acts what is bad, his conscience must indeed be doubly seared. For by the spirituality of the church of Christ is meant *that essential existence which it has in the persons of those, whose hearts and lives are truly, though not perfectly, spiritual and heavenly*. The very mention of which essential existence ought to have a salutary effect upon every reflecting mind.

In proceeding, however, to discuss this subject, it may be well to notice a point or two in reference to *the co-existence of the spiritual and the formal church of Christ*. Our Lord himself forewarned us, that there would be this co-existence. As when the Israelites went up from Egypt, a mixed multitude, not of Israelitish origin, were, from various causes of connection and attachment, led to go up with them (Exod. xii. 38,): so it has ever been with the church of God. Jehovah did, indeed, sift the chaff from the wheat before he planted his

church in Canaan ; and Jesus, by his Spirit and by his power, cut off such false professors as Judas, and Ananias, and Sapphira, before he unveiled his church to the Gentile world. But these were extraordinary acts upon the part of heaven, seemingly intended to give the world a fair and correct idea of what the church was made by God ; as the earth shewed itself to the angels, before the thorns and briars, the diseases and death, consequent upon man's sin, had disfigured its virgin beauty. Generally, however, God has, to a certain extent, permitted the tares and wheat to grow together ; that is to say, He has not *miraculously* interfered to cleanse the church. And it is to be observed, that although this circumstance springs from sin, although it is evil in itself, (Ps. cvi.) and although it is a trial and a temptation to the true people of God, yet has it by Him, *in some respects*, been over-ruled for good. Even when the wheat was almost entirely concealed, if not choked, by the viler growth, as it was in Jerusalem, when

Jesus came to it, there was produced by God some good; his institutions were by these false professors *maintained*, though *misunderstood*, and his oracles were *preserved*, though *disobeyed*. There is surely abundant matter for admiration here. When, for example, we see such men as Caiaphas and Annas engaged in continuing the Mosaic services, when we see the Rabbim acting the part of such scrupulous guardians of the word of God, when we see the pharisees exalting and establishing the memory of the prophets, by building splendid tombs over their ashes, how wonderful is the spectacle! Hypocrites and rebels as these men were, contending with all their hearts "against the Lord and against his Christ," they were, nevertheless, in certain particulars, important agents in the great work of salvation. Not, alas! that they laboured to their *own* salvation. No! The outer and the formal church is not to the inner and spiritual, even as the husk is to the kernel. The relative position of the two is far more directly

opposite. For all the ordinances and revelations of the Most High, which are to the latter the means and "the savour of life," are to the former the causes and "the savour of death:" the latter are blessed by the *consistent* grace of God, but the former are condemned by their own profession, "they have no cloke for their sin," their privileges testify against them, their abused and slighted mercies harden their hearts and make them in a tenfold degree the children of perdition.

II. THE INABILITY OF MAN ACCURATELY TO SEPARATE THE SPIRITUAL AND FORMAL CHURCH. When Jesus began to unfold the dawnings of his glory, "many," it is told us, "believed in his name." (John ii. 23.) This faith, however, seems to have been little more than a strong conviction that He was the Messiah. And therefore our Lord knowing "what was in man," did not "commit himself to them:" He did not make them his companions in his private haunts and purposes; *one* Judas being enough for the fulfilment of the

Scriptures. We however cannot act as He did. We cannot search the hearts and try the reins. Even the Apostles, with all the light of their inspiration and their experience, could never infallibly detect the goats amidst the sheep; it was not their penetration but the overt fruits of unbelief that made manifest Ananias, Sapphira, Simon Magus, and Demas. It may indeed be judged that it would conduce greatly to the comfort of every child of God, were he so gifted with a "discerning of spirits," as to be certain respecting every professing fellow-traveller to Sion. But God has seen it best to keep from us this knowledge. It is one of his own sovereign attributes. In things natural and in things spiritual his will is, that we should labour on, not indeed in an absolute midnight but with an uncertain light upon the side of earth, in order that our dependance and our peace may be upon Him, and from Him alone. Thus to the believer, the world is dark, the professing church is dim, but heaven is bright and clear.

This topic is urged for two ends. The first is, to prevent sincere Christians from giving needless offence, by appearing arrogantly to determine which are the vessels of wrath, and which of mercy. "Wise as serpents" they were told to be, and their wisdom lies in never taking up a position unwarrantable and uncalled for. And such a position is the position of any one who maintains that in this state the plants of the wilderness and those of the eternal Paradise can by the eye of man be distinctly severed. Our Lord indeed cautioned his disciples against this, when in the parable before alluded to, that of the tares and wheat (Matt. xiii. 29,) He represented the householder as forbidding that the tares should be rooted up by his servants, lest the wheat also should be destroyed. He then declared, it is true, his mind especially against the use of force (by royal swords, or inquisitorial fires, or by any other means) yet this prohibition of force in his blessed kingdom was founded upon our inability to form exact judgments of one another.

The second end is, to save sincere Christians from continual disappointments. It is unquestionably the duty of every one to look carefully upon the fruits produced by others, and to examine them, to the best of his powers, by the light of revelation. So doing, he learns with what errands to despatch his prayers to the courts above, he is also warned whose conduct to imitate, advice to follow, and intimacy to woo, and whose to shun. Yet unless he also bears about with him in his bosom the recollection, that in this matter, as in all others, he is a poor fallible mortal, still only partially illuminated, he may be brought into great discouragement. When he beholds those failing whom he deemed to be the pillars of the church, those striking upon rocks whom he deemed to be the most gallant vessels, those wandering into darkness whom he deemed to be guiding stars, he may be led to impute to the work and to the promises of God, a precariousness and weakness which in reality belong merely to his powers of discrimination.

For these reasons, therefore, in asserting the co-existence of the spiritual or formal church, and in selecting with our utmost care our leaders, and our associates, it is right and profitable to know and feel, that our judgment may be continually in error.

III. THE SPIRITUAL CHURCH IS NEVERTHELESS, STRICTLY SPEAKING, THE ONLY CHURCH OF CHRIST. That there is but one church of Christ is a truth which follows as a necessary inference from the first principle of revelation. For what is that? Is it not that Christ is God, that God is *one* God, and that this one God is *perfect*, and therefore *unchangeable*? Of such a God the people, who constitute his church, must be one as to their spiritual character. Heathenism allows its votaries to exhibit qualities, and to be guided by motives of the most opposite kind. Its "gods and lords" are many, very different from each other, and fickle and uncertain in their approbation or disapprobation even of the same actions. So that liberty and scope are not



only given to men to worship Jupiter, or Apollo, or Mars, or Bacchus, according to their tastes and temperaments, but (Homer gives us here the most glaring illustration) the very same persons maintaining the same conduct and disposition may be objects of the favour of the same Jupiter to-day, and of his wrath to-morrow. Thus is it with these phantoms of man's corrupted and besotted imagination. Not so with the true and only God. He being evermore of "one mind," condemns and approves for ever, according to the invariable standard of his own pure will. Hindoos have averred, that a variety of religions is like a variety of flowers, a pleasant spectacle. But the varieties which exist in the material beauties of nature are in fact varieties of one kind: and whatever moral varieties and gradations may be found amongst the people of God, their moral state must be fundamentally the same.

But we are not left to gather this important, this momentous truth merely from

an inference. By the expressions of his own inspiration, God shews that He distinguishes and will distinguish from all the world, a certain class of persons for his own. From all the world; not from heathens only, not from the vicious only, not from sceptics only, but from formalists as well. Every one may perceive, that the minds of those observing the same forms may be essentially divers, and the minds of those observing divers forms may be essentially alike, and that therefore it is not in consequence of our observing these or those forms that we are made parts of the spiritual church, but in consequence of the intrinsic character into which we have been wrought. Now the Scriptures stamp and establish this notion as being perfectly correct. They represent the church of God as being intimately united with Him in Christ, and intimately united also within itself. Culling the most agreeable images of union from the works of God and of man, referring to a "city," a "temple," a "vine," the hu-

man "body," a flock of "sheep," a "kingdom," a "family," and to marriage, the inspired writers teach us again and again, that the true church is one and homogeneous: that it is a spiritual community with a spiritual head. And whilst by those phrases we are instructed that the true church is a *thing by itself*, living on the earth but belonging to heaven, so are we expressly informed that many who appear to be of it, are not so. To this effect is the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, the declaration of the Apostle Paul that "all are not Israel who are of Israel;" the warning of the Apostle John concerning those who have a "name to live and are dead." Thus both positively and negatively is it shewn, that *the spiritual church* is, strictly speaking, the only church of Christ. Yes, this is the church, which is the Lord's "one" and "undefiled;" this is the church, over every accession to which the angels arise to new flights of praise; this is the church, for the

sake of which, all prophecies, promises, types, services, ministrations, have been given and ordained; this is the church, for whose good all things are made to work, and for whose interests the might of kingdoms is set aside; this is the church, for which the very world was made, that in it as in a mirror "the manifold grace of God" might be displayed; this is the church, for which in the accomplishment of miracles God suspended the action of his own physical ordinances; this is the church, which Christ loved and for which He gave himself, "that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to himself, a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. v.)

Does this seem to breathe a bigoted exclusiveness? If so, be it further seen, that its justness and its truth are additionally confirmed by every rational and scriptural idea that we can form of heaven. Here, although God invisibly pur-

sues his own fair plans of wisdom, all is externally discordant. Faith and unbelief, prayers and curses, depravity and grace, all kinds of good and all kinds of evil are perpetually intermixed. Into heaven, however, nothing will enter to defile it, nothing to mar its symmetrical and harmonious beauty. The people that are admitted into it, are those, and those only, who are "made ready," and "prepared for the Lord." As in the prophet's vision, (Ezek. xxxvii.) the bones came together at the sound of his preaching, but the stones and rocks of the valley remained as shapeless and as separate as before, so will the spirits of the just, who have been previously adapted to take a part and fill a place in heaven, be raised to it in glory, whilst the unregenerate will be cast out into darkness. Were this not so, heaven would have even less of concord than is here. For an increase of power and faculty, an emancipation from all pain and weakness, and a perpetuity of existence, with perfect pleasure in sensation, would be gifts tend-

ing to encourage the development of evil in all the children of evil. It would be adding the Leviathan's strength to the adder's poison.

But there is another thought inducing scepticism on this point. The church of Christ, especially when restricted to its spiritual portion, is to the carnal eye so small in *bulk*. Its numbers, wealth, power, talents, how insignificant are they in comparison with those of the world. Place the kingdom of God by the side of the kingdoms of men, and the former is, outwardly, to the latter, as a handfull of corn to a forest. And when some think on this, they become incredulous, and are even tempted to mock at the idea of one small company being the chosen object of heavenly and eternal love. But Paradise was small in comparison with the earth; the grain is small in comparison with the husk and stalk; the eye is small in comparison with the body; and what then, if in spiritual matters likewise, that which is smallest should be most precious? God

looks "down from heaven on the children of men," to see whether there are any who seek after Him, to love and serve Him : He finds a few, and upon that few settles the sunshine of his smile. This is not urged in order to encourage self-glorifying feelings, such as marred what was really excellent in the Puritans, but simply to counteract feelings which might cloud the truth.

IV. MEN MAY EXAMINE THEMSELVES WHETHER THEY BELONG TO THIS CHURCH OR NOT. It has been shewn, that it is impossible for us universally and absolutely to determine, whether other persons form part of this true and inner church. But self-examination upon the point is more easy. Indeed it is obviously an urgent and paramount duty to look to it, that we are in a situation of spiritual as well as of bodily well-being and safety, and that we are in a right relationship to God our Creator and our Judge. And if this is a duty, it cannot be absolutely impracticable. God never calls upon man even to attempt

the performance of what can only be performed by angels or by himself. And as He says to us, "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves," it is manifest, that this examination may be effected. Yet, though not by any means impracticable, the duty must be confessed to present an *appearance* of great difficulty. In the first place, there stands before us the fact, that no religious profession, no knowledge, no office, no gifts can be depended upon as sealing their possessors for children of God; there having already been clusters of professors, ministers, presbyters, bishops, disciples, evangelists, prophets, and priests with the Lord's name on their foreheads, and Satan's image on their hearts. The second fact is, that not only are we all of us disposed to flatter ourselves, but that the world also will quietly suffer us to be as self-complacent as we please, with respect to our *spiritual* condition, if we are *silent* about it; although it would keenly deride our vanity, did we suppose ourselves to be far more strong,



beautiful, rich, powerful, or wise than we really are.

These apparent difficulties will, however, quickly melt away before the unquestionable importance and pertinency of the points, in regard to which a sincere man may inspect himself. "If," he may surely most reasonably say within his own heart, "if I am of that inner circle of believers, who worship God in the Spirit, and love Him as his adopted children, this peculiar state of mine must of necessity have certain peculiar characteristics. And, not judging of myself by myself, but attentively surveying the whole of the instruction given me in the Scriptures, I readily perceive that these characteristics must be distinct and plain. I must, for example, assuredly above all things, love the *doctrines* of the Gospel, for these doctrines reveal to me the glorious character of God; they explain to me my state by nature, and received into my heart, dispose me also to receive every practical rule with a willing and docile mind. (2 John 9, and Rom.

vi. 17.) I must, in the next place, not only by the power of these doctrines, be externally reformed, but rightly to glorify God, and rightly to be prepared for heaven, I must actually experience towards God the spiritual moods of veneration, confidence, gratitude, wonder, and adoration. I must also rejoice in being enabled to retain Him in my knowledge, and that not by such means as would destroy the impressions of his omnipresence and spirituality, not by crucifixes, painted windows, rosaries, pictures, and material emblems, but by diligently seeking his face and going forth to meet Him in the closet and the church, in every private and every public duty. (Isa. lxiv. 5.) I must, moreover, not only be anxious and happy to retain Him in my knowledge, but I shall not be able to be at peace without striving to make known his glory. (Ps. xxix. 9.)

“ Thus impelled and thus labouring, I shall further be strongly attached to all the means of grace, sending forth my roots in every due direction, to gain more spiritual

strength, as a man who exercises his body requires the more bodily food: not, indeed, setting the sacraments above other ordinances, but rather esteeming them to be *secondary and subsidiary*, as the moon is to the sun, though still highly useful. I shall pre-eminently value the Word of God, as being that instrument which God himself most honours, and on which all the others depend for efficacy; as being that, which brings my mind into contact with the mind of my Creator and my Saviour, and continually expands it and elevates it from 'glory to glory.' And, however my flesh may fail in the moment of trial and temptation, I shall rest persuaded that fame, ease, friendship, fortune, and life ought to be cheerfully laid down before the cross, if fidelity to God demands the sacrifices, for my 'fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.' And, finally, if I am indeed amongst the living members of the church of Christ, I must, without doubt, feel a continual dependence upon that gracious influence of

the Comforter, by which only every low and unworthy influence can be overcome, and Christ dwell within my bosom by faith and love."

V. THE VITALITY OF THE SPIRITUAL CHURCH OF CHRIST. "Because I live ye shall live also." This is one of those glorious declarations which Christ makes to his church, and which casts upon it so surpassing a radiance of heavenly light. And this declaration assuredly implies, not only that each real member of this church shall live for ever above, but that the church itself shall never be extinct below. Christ is indeed that greater "David," for whose sake and honour a living "lamp" is always kept burning; He is that "Everlasting Father," whom in all ages a "seed shall serve;" He is that "true and only Potentate," whose dominion, apparently at times brought low, evermore swells again, and spreads itself abroad to universal astonishment, having its tides of strength perpetually recruited from the inexhaustible fountains of his energy.

The vitality of the spiritual church of

Christ must, when reflected on, afford the most reasonable and substantial joy to every heavenly-minded Christian. It must be pleasant to him to be conscious that he forms part of a system and a community which will not only outlive all the powers and principalities of man, but even the present dynasties of nature: for though the sun and stars, from their thrones of light, have seen the grandeurs of man appear, and burst like bubbles on the sea, they themselves will fail, when the church of Christ is exalted far beyond their heights. It must be pleasant to him to know, that the world will never be left without some lights to direct it truly unto Bethlehem, some voices crying in the wilderness, "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world!" And it must be also pleasant to him to think, that amidst the darkness of this lower world, there will be evermore maintained by the hand of God that living mirror, over which even the angels from on high stoop down to contemplate the reflected glory of the face of Jesus.

This vitality of the church of Christ

has been severely tested. Amongst all people and at all times it has had to bear the freezing cold of neglect, or the scorching heat of persecution, and this not from avowed unbelievers only, but from the professing church no less. Its first and one of its fairest children was martyred by him who should have been his guide and his defender: and when the angels of heaven looked down on that event, the death of Abel by the hand of Cain, it must have been to them an intimation, that of such a kind would be, always be, the earthly welcome of the children of light. For so it has been. Enoch, and those who believed his prophecy, were mocked by the whole world, (Jude 15); and in the time of Noah, it appears that the flood, which drowned the ungodly, actually preserved (2 Pet. ii. 5,) the small remnant of believers from their increasing violence. Nor did the world amend after God had once more given the blooming earth to the race of Adam, had guaranteed the regularity of the seasons, and had set the bow of pro-

mise in the clouds. The carnal mind still displayed and exercised its enmity against Him, by vexing those who were begotten of Him. And thus the storm against the church continued, even when we might have least expected it. David, the deliverer of his country, crowned with "excellent majesty," was, for his piety, made the "song of the drunkards," and felt the words of his revilers to be sharper than drawn swords. And during the period which ensued, (that period when, for more than one thousand years, God sent his prophets to the world, and spoke by their tongues and pens,) the persecution slackened not. Indeed the prophets themselves were continually made "destitute, afflicted, and tormented;" they were subjected to "daily derision," and to ill usage of every infamy. And, as in former days, the flood preserved the little flock of believers from being utterly destroyed by the unbelieving Nimrods of their day, so the Babylonian captivity saved them from the cruelty of false professors. Nebu-

chadnezzar was sent by God to stretch his shield over the prophets, and the "poor of the land," who had listened to their words, whilst he was made a rod of iron to chastise the gainsaying and the disobedient. Thus, then, it is clear, that before Christ came, the spiritual church was, with respect to man, "afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted;" "forsaken, and grieved in spirit," (Isa. liv.) and yet from age to age maintained in being by the grace and providence of Him, who loved it with an "everlasting love." After Christ, its history presents striking analogies with the foregoing one. Christ himself, the Lord of glory, was, by the formal church, put to death; and then returning to his heaven, He bequeathed his church a rich legacy of peace, and blessedness, and glory, attended with sufferings which, though inferior to his own, were sufficiently trying to flesh and blood. These sufferings arose from three distinct and peculiar quarters. The Jews were in the van, the Gentiles formed the centre, and the Romanists the rear of



the persecuting agents. The excessive animosity of the Jews is perfectly intelligible. The first Christians were looked upon by them as being deserters from them at the time when they daily expected a great contest with the nations; and they were felt by them to be witnesses accusing them of having unjustly and foolishly slain Him who had been predicted by all their prophets. Not only, then, in Judea, (Acts ix.) but in all the cities of the Roman empire (Acts xiv. and xv.) did the Jews, by bribery and cajolery, excite the magistrates and the multitude to help them in crushing the nascent faith.

To the Jews succeeded the Gentiles. Heathenism, according to Suetonius (D. Oct. Aug. 29,) had arrayed itself in the trimmest garments, just when the divine babe was found by the Galilean shepherds, lying in apparent helplessness in the manger at Bethlehem. Its older temples had been regarnished, their number had been greatly increased, new ones arose to commemorate every important private and public event,

the priests and vestal virgins were honoured, sacrifices profusely given, and all who wished to be themselves favoured, favoured idolatry, for Augustus had become its patron and its head, and politically desired that it should be made effective. Heathenism thus recruited was for a time unconscious of the heavenly opponent, which had advanced against it. By degrees it became sensible of its danger, its wrath flamed out in persecutions more or less long and terrible, until at length it saw that itself or Christianity must be exterminated. Then, under Dioclesian and Galerius, it exerted all its strength, and for the space of ten years, and to the farthest limits of the Roman empire, (n) it raged against the Christian name. It imagined that its success was complete. Medals were stamped and pillars erected (Pictet. 527,) to attest it. But the vitality of the spiritual church was thus more fully demonstrated. Dioclesian was the last heathen emperor, who triumphed in religious matters, as he was also the last who entered Rome in military

triumph. Christianity revived as the olive branch after the flood, and Constantine was called forth to shelter it.

But dangers awaited it from another quarter. The professing church became corrupted by its own ease and influence. The formalists within it outnumbered its truly pious members, and soon learnt to oppress them. As early, indeed, as the fourth century (Moshheim,) Christianity stained its garments with blood, employing in its turn the forbidden weapons by which it had been itself assailed. During the eighth and ninth centuries it systematized this sin. The rise of the Mahomedan power and its invasion of Europe infused a strong centralizing spirit into professing Christendom; other circumstances concurred, (*n*) and the Popes of Rome having arrived at spiritual domination, strove to crush all independent conscientiousness. Popery then passed through various phases. It always, however, (whilst providing for the affections, consciences, and understandings of its votaries all kinds of suitable appliances,)

used against dissentients, when it could, the means of cruel force, and thus converted what should have been the temple of the Lord into the slaughterhouse of his children. And Popery too, like heathenism before it, imagined it had gained its end. Leo was its Augustus : and beneath his sway learning, genius, and art, combined to decorate the apostacy. But *Luther was born in the same year with Raphael* ; and what is more remarkable, Luther began to preach at Wittemberg in that very year (1517,) in which Leo's council closed their labours with " mutual congratulations on the peace, unity, and purity " of the Papal See. Then dawned the Reformation, and then the spiritual church, though expelled from some lands, had in others resting-places appointed for it by the God of heaven and earth. Here, then, are the three distinct quarters, from which have rolled the clouds of desolation, the second darker and heavier than the first, and the third than the second. They have, however, passed away ; and the vitality of the true church has only

been illustrated by their fury. This will be better understood, when we have laid open the two next divisions.

VI. THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE SPIRITUAL CHURCH OF CHRIST. By this universality is meant the moral identity, the sameness in principle and character of the true church during all periods and circumstances and dispensations, and amongst men of all conditions and countries. Let Romanists enquire, "where was your religion or your church before the Reformation?" Any one, who is a Christian in spirit and in truth, may answer, "it was with your victims in the closet, the valley, and the dungeon, it was with the Apostles in their labours, with the Samaritan woman at the well, with Daniel in Babylon, with Hezekiah on his throne, with the little maid in Syria, with David flying or triumphant, with Moses as shepherd or as lawgiver, with Noah in the ark, with Abel at his sacrifice." Or, in other words, that is the genuine catholic church, which exists as being morally one amidst all exterior changes and differences,

even amidst those, which God himself has wrought in the services and economy of religion.

In taking, however, an extended view of this universality there are two ideas which should be removed, that the landscape may not be obscured. The first is, that the principles and the characters of those, who are evidently spoken of in Scripture as the Saints of God, *must* have been different at some epochs from what they were at others. "How," it may for instance be demanded, "could Joshua and David, with their warriors, be true brethren to the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus?" Notwithstanding, however, the profane observations which have been made upon the supposed vindictive and warlike spirit of David's psalms, it may at once be asserted that all such ideas are quite illusive. The pious captains and soldiers, of Joshua's army or of David's, had precisely the same moral features with those centurions and legionaries of the Roman standard, who were converted unto the faith of Christ. The believing

military, with Joshua or David, simply did the Lord's will in executing his justice upon the abominably vicious heathens: the believing military of the Christian age would have done the same, had they been so commanded. (n) And it is to be remembered, that not only did those ancient Saints stop, where the Lord stopped, (unlike the Mahommedans who intoxicated themselves with blood) but that God only gave them victory, when their holiness and brotherly love were great, making them to resemble "gardens by the river's side." (Numbers xxiv. 6.) Besides which, it is manifest, that Jehovah then gave his people continual lessons of his own mercy, watchfulness, and long-suffering, and of the beauty and blessedness of peace and unity, and expressly shewed them that they were not to be a nation of conquerors but a "nation of priests" interceding for the world and not destroying it; so that his true children could not but have been the same, in all the essential ingredients of conduct and disposition, with those who now live according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The second idea, tending to confuse our perception of the universality of the church of Christ, springs from the inconsistent and incomprehensible descriptions of two covenants, given by theologians of almost every class and kind. The *Scriptures never speak of more than one covenant of salvation*; “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of *prophecy*” (that is, of revelation) from its first page to its last. But sometimes from misunderstanding the great covenant itself, and sometimes from a wish to heighten by the dark shades of contrast the bright glories of its form, there has grown up a habit of delineating *two* covenants, one of works and the other of grace. Now of these, the former is entirely imaginary. What has been misrepresented and magnified into it is that peculiar engagement made by God with the Israelitish nation, in the same manner in which He made peculiar engagements with individuals. It was to the effect, that according to the degree in which through his grace they continued to uphold and to illustrate that system which was to pre-



figure and prepare the way for Christ, so should they be *nationally* preserved and blessed. This national obedience was to be their national "righteousness," the seal of God upon them justifying his election of them ; this was to be their "life," the overt cause of their national perpetuity. It is true that in parts of the New Testament there has been thought to be some ground for the establishment of a covenant of works. The parts are those, in which the Gospel is opposed to the Pharisaic glosses upon the law, as in our Lord's sermon on the mount, or to the Pharisaic disconnection of the law from Christ its end, as in the epistles of the Apostle Paul. A careful review however, both of the Old and New Testament, will soon induce the conviction, that from the first there was, respecting the salvation of *man*, but one great covenant, of which Christ was the Alpha and Omega. This covenant was *necessarily* presented and developed somewhat differently in different ages ; yet was it in its grand doctrines and precepts ever unaltered

because *unalterable*; ever paramount over those other divine covenants with Noah, Abraham, Judah, David, the Israelites, heathen kings, and “the beasts of the field,” which all forwarded its execution; and ever, from the day in which it was given, continuously linked together by types and prophecies. Touching *eternal and spiritual salvation* every Jew and every human creature are under this one covenant. God is one being, his moral laws and requisitions are unchangeable; heaven is one place or state, and they for whom it is made ready must consequently be alike in principle and character. And so they have been. Had there indeed been more than one covenant of salvation there could have been no congruity between believers in divers ages. Their respective moral characters must have been both inwardly and outwardly as much affected by these two covenants, as the respective civil characters of Spartans and Englishmen by their political constitutions. And thus neither upon the earth nor in heaven could the church of faith have had

an aspect of peculiar and consistent beauty. This beauty however it does pre-eminently possess : for vast as are the intervals between the men of this world, between a prince and a beggar, a philosopher and a savage ; yet in all the highest points of principle and character, of resemblance and of fellowship, both Scripture and profane history attest that they, who have believed, are thoroughly together. We not only find the contemporaries, Lot and Abraham, of far different degrees in grace, acting in precisely the same spirit (compare Gen. xviii. 2. with Gen. xix. 1.) ; but we recognize the same heavenly mind, and noble conduct, and lovely feelings in Abraham and in Paul ; we hear aged Jacob saying, " I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord," and aged Simeon exclaiming, " Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation ;" we see the same constancy in Abel and in Stephen ; nay, mentally placing the converted Greenlander and Hottentot by the side of David and of Isaiah, we discover in them a thou-

sand common chords of faith and hope and love.

VII. THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE SPIRITUAL CHURCH OF CHRIST, IN KNOWLEDGE, PURITY, AND INFLUENCE. With this enduring *vitality*, with this essential *universality*, the spiritual church of Christ has also a continual progressiveness. Periods undoubtedly are there in its history, when it not only seems to retire like the ebbing sea, but almost entirely to leave the earth : nevertheless *upon the whole*, through the grace and providence of God, not through the virtue and wisdom of man, it may be seen to be advancing. Why should it not be thought so ? Does not science, does not art, does not learning move onward ? Take as an illustration the case of science only, and that with respect to one of its departments only, astronomy. By dint of continued observation, reflection, and mechanical improvement, one spark of truth has been elicited after another, until the light beamed upon the world from the full orb of the Newtonian system. In fact, the mind of man

demands constant novelty to supply it with constant interest and rouse it to constant exertion. In heavenly as well as in earthly matters this law prevails; and thus God in the one as well as in the other has opened a field of knowledge, which never can be exhausted.

To verify this assertion, the inquirer has only to take up positions and make surveys of the moral condition of the church, at successive eras. Let the first position be in the patriarchal era. It was in those days that God, who had once saved the truth by almost destroying the human race, took a different course for the same end. From a world, sinking deeper and deeper into darkness, Abraham was supernaturally called out, and supernaturally enlightened. The God of the covenant inspiring him with a love of the Messiah who was to be his seed, was felt by him to be indeed "a God of Glory," for he "rejoiced to see the day of Christ, he saw it and was glad." By the magnetic power of this faith, Abraham and the other patriarchs were

elevated above the world both in knowledge and in virtue. Devout without being superstitious, pure, upright, generous and innocent, without being hermits, they moved amongst a corrupt generation to guide and teach it; "touch not," said the Lord, "my anointed, and do my prophets no harm." Their morality, however, was imperfect. They possessed slaves and practised polygamy. Of these habits, the former is against the whole tenor of revelation, and especially against that opening page of it, which describes man in general as having been made in the image of God, and which shews that God gave the lower animals into his hands for property, but not his fellow-creatures. The latter is no less opposed to the unalterable will of God, as Malachi afterwards reminded the Jews in that remarkable remonstrance, (ii. 15.) "And did He not make *one* (woman)? Yet had He the residue of the spirit (of life)! And wherefore one? That He might seek a godly seed."

Let the second position be in the Mosaic

era. Revelation now begins to send forth its breathing harmonies; faith takes a higher flight; obedience girds itself for duties more complicated and more arduous. The privileges of the *spiritual* church have now become exceedingly precious. To *it* the ordinances were no burden, no more than the clusters of grapes were to Joshua and Caleb, or than a lantern is to the man who holds it, and enjoys it in a dangerous road and dark night, or than the seals of a title-deed are to the heir. Apart from Christ every thing was then, indeed, a burden to those who were dead in spirit, and the burden became heavier, as the Rabbim, *during the silence of prophecy and inspiration*, loaded the law with their multifarious inventions. But to the *spiritual* church the Mosaic ordinances were the plumage of its wings. The temple and the temple services were its congenial abode and occupations, in both of which it loved to contemplate "the fair beauty of its Lord." Yet, notwithstanding this state of privilege involved the proportionably im-

portant duties of uplifting among the nations the testimony of Jesus, and of illustrating holiness in all the complicated relationships of civil and social life, the church was still far from being exact in its moral form. The two evils which existed in the patriarchal era, with others of a like nature, existed still. Mitigated, indeed, they were. Slaves from amongst the heathen must have been rare, (*n*) for Israel, planted as a vine in Canaan, was no longer to be the cause of military extermination, but of spiritual blessedness. And at home, besides the *positive* restrictions upon slavery, the laws concerning usury, and the fraternal spirit of the whole economy must have greatly checked it. And so, too, the express interdiction of marrying sisters, (a fault committed by Jacob,) and the care taken by Jehovah of the persons and property of women, must have curbed the licence and the tyranny of polygamists. Still it is plain that these and other evils, in some measure, remained, even when the national code came directly



from on high. This may excite surprise : but it is to be remembered, that the *national* code was not brought up by Jehovah to the height of his abstract laws. Had it been so, He must either have winked at the most gross breaches of his enactments, or in forthwith punishing the guilty, have eradicated nearly the whole people. Jehovah was gently and gradually extricating man from his vicious courses and propensities, like a shepherd who, with care and tenderness, disengages the thorns and briars with which a stray sheep has torn and vexed itself.

Let the third position be in the early time of the Christian era. The church was then, no doubt, borne upward to a loftier elevation than any reached before, God having manifested himself in Christ, and the atonement (that great subject of all prophecy) having been completed. With regard to the world without, it went forth not to correct nor terrify, but to save and bless, with no weapons but those of light, and no armour but that of love. With re-

gard to itself within, it was a vineyard which the Lord had cleared from those evils which had been long so rampant, and which he visited and trained in every part, high and low. Husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, governors and slaves, Greeks, Jews, and barbarians, all came beneath his hand. It is not, however, to be supposed that the church could then so readily, as afterwards, attain to the *highest* points of faith, knowledge, and holiness. The standing it gained at first was not in consequence of its possessing *more advantages*, but *more grace*, than in the following ages. It could, indeed, then consult the apostles in person. . But the apostles being few, and ever moving, and the Christians being scattered over Europe, Asia, and Africa, these could not have had more than the advantages of hearing now and then a public address from inspired lips, and of noticing, as Polycarp did, how they looked, and where they stood. And as a counterpoise to this advantage the early Christians, in com-

parison with ourselves, laboured under great disadvantages. Whether they were Jews or Gentiles, they were encumbered by their own former habits, feelings, and opinions; new created certainly they were, and winged for heaven, yet with the broken shells of their former faiths more or less adhering to them; they lived in the midst of a world in which the standard of morals was daily becoming lower; they had not the means of so freely multiplying and examining the Scriptures as we now possess; many prophecies have, since their time, been fulfilled; Christianity had not then been put to so full a proof, nor its moral beauties so experimentally elucidated. Ours, in fact, are the labours of all former ages as well as of our own. Nor can it be denied, that the present greater accuracy and extent of learning and philosophy, and greater refinement in manners, ought, with divine grace, to help *us*. Men, that were comparatively unaccustomed to critical investigations, and unacquainted with natural effects and causes, and untaught by the

facts of genuine social blessedness, lay much more open to errors, both in sentiment and in conduct. Hence we cannot wonder that the bright and bridal beauty of the church was so soon partially obscured. Had the church continued earnest in its study of the Scriptures, and in its suit for grace, no doubt it would have improved more rapidly. But looking simply to the natural consequences of being placed in certain circumstances, it need occasion little surprise that Clement and "the Shepherd" should have written such puerilities about the phenix and the twelve nations; that Ignatius, in magnifying his office, should have verged on blasphemy; that Barnabas and Origen should have spoken, as they did, about the "red heifer" and other types; that Justin should have seen the *Lord's supper* in Isaiah's words, "bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure," and have imputed to the Jews the excision of prophecies which *could not* have been inspired; that in the election of Bishops there should sometimes have occurred the

monstrous evils Chrysostom so forcibly depicts (Π: Iep: I.); that Eusebius should have believed what he relates of the all-healing plant, which grew to the border of Christ's statue erected by the woman with the issue of blood (L.vii. 18); that there should have been a general credence given to such idle fables as that of Plato's body being found with a profession of Christianity inscribed on it; that Bede himself, that lover of God and truth, who died in finishing his translation of St. John into Saxon, should have made such gross mistakes concerning miracles, (pp. 175, 180, 194;) that vehement disputes should have raged for years concerning the time of Easter and the form of the tonsure, as *though salvation lay in them*; that frauds should have been deemed pious, and semi-suicidal asceticism supposed to transcend angelic purity; and that, in short, there then should have been in the church those seeds of evil which, in the decline of spirituality, outgrew and choked the truth.

In thus regarding the faults and errors of Christianity before it was formally seduced

into its splendid apostasy, we desire not to degrade it. Granted let it be that during the first six or seven centuries there continually appeared in the midst of all this darkness a self-devotedness, a disregard of life, a charity, a heart-knowledge, a nobleness of thought, an inward experience, an *earnestness* (such as contrasts strangely with the levity of the great poets of mythology (*n*)), and even a spiritual joy (such as still shows green and fresh in the pages of Macarius); yet would it be *ungrateful* not to urge that *their times were evil in comparison with our own*. For in sooth our *times* must be better even than apostolic times, it being *then* needful to direct (1 Tim. iii. 3,) *that ministers* should not be strikers, brawlers, drunkards, misers, or polygamists.

By the grace and providence of God the spiritual church is now placed upon a higher eminence. History, geography, science, literature, civilization, experience, and time have been made its ministers. Controversy, within it, has tended ultimately to

elucidate and establish its doctrines ; (n) scepticism, without it, has called attention to parts of its revelations, previously seldom noticed, and ill understood. (n) Discovery, whether animated by a spirit of covetousness or of enterprise, has enlarged the sphere of its operations ; conquest, whether prompted by justice, generosity, or pride, has opened doors through which it may walk in peace. All things are ready, that it should go in and possess the land.

Why does it not do so ? At home and abroad, why is it not *more evidently* a pure and powerful instrument of good ?

It may be replied, firstly, the minds of many have been attracted *backwards*. The most unchristian sentiments of the Fathers, the very spirit which they derived, not from their apostolic and spiritual, but from their heathen and natural forefathers, has been revived. And the most papistical notions which clung to the Reformers have been resuscitated also. For a child to speak as a child is natural ; for it to speak as a sen-

sible and pious child is delightful ; but for a man to re-assume the language and the gestures of his childhood is imbecility. It is not thus that the exigencies of our time can be met. Our predecessors went beyond their time, we must go beyond, not sink beneath our own. If Ignatius, Chrysostom, and Augustin were now bodily in the midst of us, much would they have to learn and unlearn before they could be permitted to teach our youngest school-children.

It may be replied, secondly, the minds of the most truly enlightened and devoted have, in some measure, been enervated by their long immunity from persecution, and their quiet session beneath the vines and fig-trees of liberty and ease. True, indeed, it is that the Spirit of God hath moved over our consciences, affections, and judgments, *so that faults are now confessed, and duties are now recognised and advocated*, which have long lain amongst forgotten things. The church has at least *looked out* from the Capua of its repose, and has ac-



knowledge that it *ought* to take no rest whilst in Christendom, and in the world there are so many marsh and miry places to be reclaimed.

And God has richly blessed this acknowledgment, although followed up by performances so imperfect. Abroad, individuals, villages, families and islands have been regenerated; whilst cannibalism, infanticide, sutteeism and slavery have retired at the approach of our awakened faithfulness. And within professing Christendom it cannot be denied, that in the greater humanity of our laws, temperance in living, decency in language, and attention to the poor, the rising influence of true religion has become apparent. Peculiar evils indeed there are, generated by our worldly wealth, and worldly knowledge, and by *the congregating tendency* of our pursuits. And how are these to be encountered? Sincere believers, the work, as far as God may please to prosper it, is *with you*. To whatever body you belong, aim at becoming more heavenly-minded, and more

pure in your motives and in your means. *Hate every thing in comparison with Christ. Despise every thing in comparison with the souls of men. Let the faith of Jesus Christ and HIM CRUCIFIED* master and absorb all party-spirit, self-interest, and political predilections. Live steadfastly and earnestly for ONE great end. And it may be that God will look upon us. And if we ourselves behold no marvels, it may be, that a generation more enlightened, aspiring and devoted will be raised up to improve upon our lessons. One thing is certain, that no laws, no discipline, no force, no instruction, no cost can avail any thing without an increase of that spirituality, in which is all the life of goodness. "I, if I be lifted up," said our Lord, "will draw all men unto me;" and when the church is lifted up in its affections, it then is truly impregnated with the power of raising man. How beautiful is the fact, in nature, that as the moon ascends the meridian, it draws after it, at a slight interval of time, all the strong ocean's waves! How much more

beautiful the fact in grace, that as the church becomes more holy, it elevates the *general standard of thought and feeling throughout the world!* The effect how great, the means how pure and mild! Still then, oh! still advance in temper, sentiment, and conduct. We know not, indeed, how the Lord of all will end the awful history of the world; but this we know, that his true church should evermore believe, that *to it* one blessing is the pledge and the preparative for another; that *in it* God not only works the wonders of creation as amongst things irrational, and the wonders of providence as amongst all men, but the wonders of redemption; and that *by it* God “hath commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.”

## NOTES.

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\*.\* The *words* cited show the point adverted to, *the line* shows the end of the paragraph, whence they are taken.

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Page iv, l. 19. *A distinct style.*—Plain words and plain propositions are by some not only avoided but condemned as irreverent in those matters, in which, because they were so important, the Apostle Paul “used *great plainness of speech!*” But of all equivocal terms none is more objectionable than the term “real presence.” Divines continually assert, that there is *a* real presence in the sacramental elements, though not of that carnal kind that Rome speaks of. But if not of that kind, let them specify of *what* kind it is. Let them say, how Christ is *more really present with the elements, than he is with his own Gospel*, with that Gospel, which He seems to identify with himself in calling himself “THE WORD,” and which, replete with his own life and power, He describes as “piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit,” and as being “*a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*” The word “regeneration” is also frequently used in a sense, exceedingly ambiguous. In scripture

regeneration, or *παλιγγενεσία* (together with such words as *αναψυξίς*, *αποκαταστασις*, and *διορθωσις*) no doubt, means, *that more than reparation of man's fallen circumstances, which is made by Christ becoming his head in place of Adam, and which includes all blessings in grace and all in glory.*

P. i, l. 22. *The Scriptures.*—What, it may be here demanded, is the *right* subjection of private judgment? It is to have one's mind so graciously subject to the mind of God, as to be always ready to cast down one's own views and wishes before what is understood to be his will. And what is the wrong exercise of private judgment? It is to choose for oneself, particular portions of particular writers in particular ages, and thus arbitrarily to form a system, as in Mosaic work, by which the letter and the spirit of the Gospel are equally resisted. And this act is yet worse when *tradition* is made to usurp, partially or wholly, that sovereignty of revelation, of which it should simply bear witness. It is remarkable, that Timothy was charged to deliver as from St. Paul mainly what he could *fully prove* St. Paul had said, (2 Tim. xi. 2.)

P. xii, l. 1. *Political and religious sentiments.*—Any person who has mixed with pious men of different political parties must be struck with the fact alluded to. He will have found some who can see nothing good in what seems to have an aristocratical tendency, and others so strongly opposed to every thing

democratical, that not content with admiring the steady and well-balanced character of the British constitution, they will severely blame such a people as the Americans because they do not frame that for which they *have no materials*. He, however, who has been led to a higher range of observation and reflection, must see that in so corrupt a world as this God preserves some measure of general well-being, by causing the democratical and aristocratical tendencies to work against each other. By the former, a continuity of sloth and abuse and tyranny is prevented ; by the latter, such interterminal anarchy, as would destroy all civilization. Seeing this, although upon particular occasions a Christian may act politically with promptitude and decision, he never ought to be a *party-man*, but should live and labour for the diffusion of those principles by which all natural movements are best tempered, regulated, and controlled.

P. 7, l. 6. *The Christian system*.—It is sometimes urged that only learned men can judge of these matters. But the main points are open to all. *The poorest Christian* can, for example, see that even amongst the Jews many very important things, as the Sabbatical services, and the courts of judgment (Ex. xviii. 19.) were regulated by *no directly divine authority* ; that *the Apostles* could no more have successors than the *Prophets* ; that Timothy and Titus were simply “evangelists,” not to Crete and Ephesus only, but to Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica, and Dalmatia also, there laying the *Apostolic* “staff upon the face” of the congregations ;

that it is no more likely, that the "Angels of the churches" signified peculiar official *individuals* than that the "seven kings" (Rev. xviii. 10.) did so, whereas these last, evidently meant *governments of various forms*; that St. Paul's charge, "commit those to faithful men," can give no title to *unfaithful* men; that *three great bodies*, (the Gr. Lat. and Angl. Churches) *to each of which Apostolical descent is by some persons equally ascribed, instead of agreeing to lead those, who adopt the principle of Apostolical descent, in one path,* ACTUALLY DENOUNCE AND STIGMATISE EACH OTHER AS GUILTY OF MOST DANGEROUS ERRORS; that many *women*, such as the mothers of Samuel, David (Ps. lxxxvi. 16.) and Timothy have in all ages been found highly useful, and therefore should be expected to be peculiarly so in the Christian dispensation; that, although the New Testament establishes the profitableness of a stated ministry, the sacrificial Priesthood, which "no man taketh unto himself," was for ever consummated and ended in Christ (Heb. v. 4.); that to say "grace be with *all* them who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity" is duly to echo back the mind of the Apostle Paul; and that our Lord himself *never told his people to distinguish true teachers by their official genealogies, but BY THEIR FRUITS* (Matt. vii. 16.) The most unlearned man is competent to entertain such plain and decisive views as these, without his having ever read, that at one time many painters were made Bishops (Rio De la Poésie Chrétienne); that, at another children of five years old

were so, for the sake of the revenues (Fleury); or that the whole doctrine of Apostolical succession is false as to its principle, and untenable as to history. (Whateley.)

P. 10, l. 3. *The shadows have departed.*

Erasmus illustrates the cessation of the Mosaic system with his usual felicity. "Humana lex suapte sponte cessat, ubi cessarit causa, propter quam lata est; veluti si constitutio juberet singulos quotannis aliquid conferre in structuram templi, templo absoluto, cessat rigor legis." Coll. P. 350. The fathers of Trent shewed but little of this clearness, when they said that "a visible sacrifice (i. e. continued in *Christianity*) must have a visible and external priesthood." L. C. T. ii. 533.

P. 11, l. 21. *A mere atom in a mass.*—

There undoubtedly are many evil causes leading men to *individualize* themselves upon pedestals of their own. In pious hearts however, an unwillingness to change for minor reasons, and to grieve others by so doing, will keep these in constant check. But it should be noticed on the other hand, that in *non-established* Christian bodies, too much care cannot be exercised in repressing a *natural* and *corrupt* corporate spirit. In every Christian body *holding the truth*, there will be found, by fair enquirers *at the least*, an under-current of genuine piety. They who compose it are in reality the soul of their community. In every community they are indeed frequently slighted, nevertheless, it is they who bear the ark of God. And as therefore in an establishment they



should strive against its natural vices, formalism, and imperiousness, so in non-established associations should they strive against the evils of fickleness, discontent and hypocrisy.

P. 12, l. 8. *Means*.—Though this is not the place for philology, it may be remarked that it seems best to use the word “means” (singular or plural according to the context) to signify *an instrument* or *instruments*, and the word “mean” to signify that which is intermediate.

P. 17, l. 5. *Diversity*.—How the harmonious variety of nature displays the glory of God, let Cicero expound. “Ac principio terra universa cernatur . . . . . undique ipsa in sese nutibus suis conglobata, vestita floribus, herbis, arboribus, frugibus : quorum omnium incredibilis multitudo, insatiabili varietate distinguitur.”

P. 18, l. 1. *The law of uniformity*.—*Dislikes* are always evil ; *divisions* by no means so. Many *divisions* are *necessary* and *useful*. Such are the social, civil, and national divisions amongst men ; the divisions amongst their pursuits and professions ; the divisions or differences amongst their implements. Division is a good or an evil, according to the grounds on which it is made. “To cause divisions” (Rom. xvi. 17,) in a community, where all was in a way to go on well, is undoubtedly of a spirit and wisdom that cometh from beneath. But it cannot therefore with the slightest

reason be maintained, that all who leave even an orthodox *Christian community in any state*, are wrong. On the contrary, even though the community in question has been long established, though it has a vast number of adherents, and though it professedly holds the truth, yet if it be obviously incompetent for the whole of the work before it, and organically ill-adapted for part of what it undertakes, and unworthily served by much of its own agency, it may become a prime duty with those who have the gifts and the powers, to use for the gathering of the precious harvest other means *besides* those which alone it uses and allows. Thus at the Savoy Conference, the main principle of the Churchmen was as worthless as some of the objectors.

P. 19, l. 14. *Spiritual*.—There are two beautiful passages in S. Cyprian and S. Bernard, both of which undesignedly establish this spiritual principle of unity. “*Quomodo solis multi radii sed lumen unum ; et rami arboris multi sed robur unum tenaci radice fundatum ; et cum de fonte uno rivi plurimi defluunt, numerositas licet videatur exundantis copię largitate, unitas tamen servatur in origine.*” (Cyp. D. U. c. 2.) This is Cyprian’s. Bernard’s is as follows: “*Non segreget ulla greges vestros a nostris gregibus usuum diversitas colorum varietas, sed a summâ unitate derivata corrupta reparans, abscissa redintegrans, divisa vivificans, universa uniat charitas.*” (Epist. 228. 31.)

P. 26, l. 21. *In its name and its form*.—

Stillingfleet and Edgar, and indeed historians of all kinds, prove that dissensions within the Romish Church have been *quite as numerous* as those without it, and *far worse in their spirit and their effects*. Harsh terms, disingenuous arguments, and unfair generalizations are the "carnal weapons" most common amongst Protestant Christians; but terrible anathemas, awful impostures, personal violence, gross bribery, and mean intrigues have been the weapons used by rival fraternities, orders, Bishops, and Popes, within the Romish pale.

P. 28, l. 4. *Happy in his work*.—One of the collocutors in the "De Naturâ Deorum" says, that the warmth of the sun is to the universe what the animal heat is to the body; and contrasts its vivifying effect with the destructive one of a conflagration. This idea may be borrowed to set forth the effects of unholy and of holy love; the former burning to consume and waste, the latter pouring through the spirit pleasure, liberty, and ease.

P. 30, l. 6. *Formal partisan*.—*Supposing that there were no such formal partisanship*, and that a candid mind were taking a review of the religious state of England, would not the report be something of this kind? "There are in this island considerable diversities with respect to religious observances. But not only do all persons hold by one Book of doctrine and precept, but in their modes of worship, which always consist of praying, praising, and exhorting, I can see very slight

dissimilarity. One church is established by law, not however paid by the state, but chiefly supported by the lands of the aristocracy, the members of which, with many of other classes, belong to it. Besides this, there are many free associations, which possessing a greater flexibility and readiness in movement, flourish most in the towns, and amongst the changing masses of the population. The organization of all these bodies seems to me imperfect; some in one way, some in another; some by giving too much power to individuals, as to the patrons and bishops in the Establishment; others, by the want of an arbitrating and composing board of reference, as amongst the Independents; and others again by a deficiency in that order of worship, which seems necessary for reflection, as amongst the more ignorant Methodists; and so on: nevertheless, I believe, that with more zeal, purity, and love, they would altogether be very useful in their places, just as are the labourer's vari-formed instruments, the spades, rakes, and hoes of the gardener, or the ploughs, harrows, scythes, and sickles of the farmer."

P. 31, l. 10. *Upon ourselves*.—See the next note.

P. 32, l. 13. *Ingenuous confessions*.—The usual method followed is exactly the reverse of this. Competitors in the polemical arena generally put together all the virtues, and leave out all the vices of their own system, and act vice versâ with regard to that of their opponents. Nay! any man who attempts to take

an impartial and comprehensive view of *all systems* is by many branded as a traitor to his own. Yet how fine is the admonition of Maimonides, "Etiamsi possis te a manibus opponentis argumentis sophisticis te eripere, cum tamen noveris sermonem alterius (quem argumento tuo manifesto premis vel præ ipsius infirmitate vel quod ipse valeas alios in errores inducere) verum esse; in ipsius sententiam, omitta contentione descendas."

P. 32, l. 19. *Resembling God*.—"The church is so set together in its different parts, as to resemble a body, the form of which is the grace of the Holy Ghost."—Savonarola. M'Crie's Refor. in Italy, p. 450.

P. 48, l. 24. *Absolutely new*.—It is interesting to notice in *how many respects* the *synagogue* formed the model of the *church*. *Firstly, as to government*; the celebrated Wotton says, "Campegius Vitringa, in his elaborate and useful work, 'De synagogâ veteri,' has demonstrated that the public service and government of the churches planted by the apostles was built upon the Jewish synagogue." (Dis. ch. 8.) *Secondly, as to parts of the worship*; Davidson (p. 257) shows, with Hug, that the early Christians adopted the reading of lessons from the Jews. *And thirdly, as to rites*; Lightfoot, with others, deduces our baptism from the Jewish. All this illustrates the sentiment, that nothing of divine prescription should be attached to any part of the peculiar administrative form of Christianity.

P. 51, l. 17. *The gift of tongues*.—It might

be said, that Christ gave his apostles two keys, one being the knowledge of the mysteries of salvation, and the other the power of speaking in the languages of all nations: of these the first might be called the golden, the second the silver key. And be it here remarked that few texts appear to have been more obscured by controversy than those (Matt. xvi. 18, 19) concerning *the keys* and *the rock*. In the former, was not our Lord clearly alluding to the vain assumptions of the Pharisees, who by their decisions pretended to "bind and loose" (their own expressions) certain acts; and contrasting with them the *everlasting effects* consequent upon the Gospel being preached? In the latter, was not our Lord clearly referring to *himself as the Rock*, in exact agreement with modes of speech concerning himself used on other occasions, such as "*Destroy THIS temple*," and "*Whosoever shall fall on THIS stone*."

P. 57, l. 8. *Taint of superstition*.—Not long since, on attending a most splendid service in a Roman Catholic cathedral, we could not but be struck with the difference between it and the service in a quiet Protestant temple not far off. In the former there were several thousands of women and children, all gratified, no doubt, by the imposing and beautiful ceremonial; there was however no preaching. The latter was filled with mechanics and labourers, of unusual decency in dress and manner; in this case there was excellent preaching. In the same town there was a *black image* of the Virgin Mary, which was adored by multitudes,

her white image being comparatively neglected. And what was there to correct this gross superstition? Nothing, for the priesthood was silent.

P. 67, l. 17. *The ten thousands of our operatives*.—The work alluded to is “Combe’s Constitution of Man,” of which about 70,000 copies have been sold.

P. 72, l. 9. *The swords of contest*.—Fearful illustrations of this may be found in the history of Calixtines of Bohemia. That history shows, that in religious wars truth and mercy are thought disgraceful.

P. 86, l. 22. *Trodden under foot*.—In Lancellotti’s “Corpus Juris Canonici,” (p. 1167,) there are given very strong papal admonitions *against* separating the bread from the wine, or rather, the body from the blood. The separation seems to have arisen from the *penances* to which were subjected the priests who had let fall a drop of the divine blood; and perhaps the character of the wafer is to be attributed to the same cause.

P. 87, l. 5. *The perfect source of his grace*.—As the *empty* tomb proclaimed a risen and divine Saviour, so does the cessation of every thing sacrificial proclaim the absolute absorption and obliteration of the guilt of the redeemed. It may be here remarked, that our majestic Hooker seems to have misled the minds of some with regard to both the

sacramental ordinances in *this* way : they have been led to think that although in John iii. 5 and John vi. 53, it is *impossible* that our Lord could be referring to his baptism and his supper, *as existing ordinances*, inasmuch as they *did not then so exist*, yet that He was *pointing forward* to them. Such persons, however, do not see that both these declarations of our Lord and his two sacramental ordinances designated the same things, and were only so far connected as are *two indices*, which being of *different natures*, yet *guide us to the same object*. The new view of the Lord's Supper, as being the means of infusing within the recipient the principle of a glorious immortality, has been adverted to in the Preface ; it is in some respects *more* consistent and logical, but at the same time it is more bold, than the old Roman Catholic view ; more bold, because did the elements possess the *physical* virtues attributed to them, the power of disease, decay, and death would even in this world be counteracted.

P. 90, l. 10. *The hyperboles of Chrysostom.*—The allusion is to such as those which occur in the II. 'I. where, amongst other things, Chrysostom speaks of the Christian priest offering up the *Son of God, lying slain and prostrate!* How different a remark this, from that beautiful one in his first homily on St. Matthew, where he speaks of the first disciples, who had the witness of the Holy Spirit in their hearts and consciences, being crowned with the tongues of fire, *not for their own sakes, but for the conviction of gainsayers.*



Page 108, l. 12. *Gregory the Great.*—In Quesnell's "Parallel" there is a striking reply to a Jesuit's description of religious prosperity; but the latter only, as broadly illustrating a false visibility, will be given here:—"Never," he says, "were the churches so splendid, never so many spectacles or shows of piety in our temples, so many religious offices, nor so many remedies for the cure of souls." In some respects Gregory was not so bewitched by this false visibility as were others; Sextus, for example, who imagined he had given Christianity a great triumph over heathenism, by safely placing an Egyptian obelisk in front of St. Peter's. But Gregory is mentioned, on account of the great influence he seems to have had upon the human race. We learn from his history that all attempts at reformation should be made in the line and direction of truth; for what abundant and bitter fruits did some of his anti-evangelical regulations afterwards produce. Compare his extension and reformation of the church with that which, under God, David effected upon his succession to Saul. There was order, beauty, and even splendour in the latter, but it was, in spirit, a more rich and clear exposition and development of the covenant of grace. Let, therefore, the motives, instruments, and ends of those who would work for good, be purely evangelical.

P. 113, l. 11. *The inward springs of human action.*—Gifford and others have remarked, that the superior knowledge of the human heart and of

the essential principles of right and wrong, found in Seneca, Juvenal, and Persius, appears to have arisen from the Roman mind, degraded although it then was, having become unconsciously pervaded by some of the truths of Christianity.

P. 123, l. 14. *The services they rendered their oppressors.*—The spirit of humanity and obedience evinced by the Christians seems at length to have separated them, in the public judgment, from the Jews, whose false Messiahs were evermore the leaders of insurrection, and of whom Juvenal gave, no doubt, a true account, when (as if to illustrate St. Paul's expression, "contrary to all men,") he said, *that they would not even show a fountain to a stranger.*

P. 135, l. 21. *The calumnies of the Pagan faction.*—In Jenkyns' "Short Defence, &c." it is shown, that the Christians of St. Cyril's day spoke *figuratively in public* of the Lord's Supper, in order that their knowledge of its true nature might be a secret test of fellowship. An unhappy usage! Hence grew the doctrine of transubstantiation, and hence some of the heathens were really led to believe, that the Christians feasted upon human flesh.

P. 139, l. 18. *Without sacrifices or sacrificing priests.*—This point has been admirably dwelt upon in "The Kingdom of Christ Delineated." Lactantius (D. M. P. xi. and xii.) mentions both the displeasure of the Pagans, on account of the Christians

not sacrificing nor partaking of sacrifices, and also their slowness in believing that the Christians had no images.

P. 141, l. 13. *Continually revised*.—

The necessity of this will be immediately obvious to any one, who calls to mind the dresses of our ancestors ; and the present dresses of the Spanish and French Priests, which were, no doubt, in good keeping with other dresses, when first introduced. It would, therefore, if a ministerial dress were adopted, be requisite that the bishops should continually re-arrange it ; otherwise would be realized amongst us what Addison somewhere says of absurdities, if they once get into a church, there becoming sacred and perpetual.

P. 148, l. 1. *A paternal home*.—It would be out of our province to enquire into the *best* forms of Christian sanctuaries, according to the principles in the text. Perhaps the *simplest* form would be like that of a U. At the curved end of such a building might be placed, on slightly raised seats, the children ; they would thus easily hear and be seen, and might have a door-way of their own, so as to occasion little interruption. At the opposite end might stand the ministers, before them the Lord's table, and the font a little lower down, forming the foci of the building, viewed as a truncated ellipse. Around these might be placed an enclosure, of the same form with the building itself, the vacant spaces being appropriated to the sick and aged. Baptisms would be thus easily

administered in the sight of all, the Lord's Supper easily and decently accessible to large numbers at once, (the inner inclosure forming a communion rail,) and no ground lost, there being galleries, with iron pillars, all round. At all events, nothing can be more unsuitable for a place of Christian worship than a cruciform ground-plan, and many pillars and arches. It may be the work of an antiquarian, but it is no more the work of a Christian to *restore* this style than it would be to restore that of Stonehenge. When the Reformers, in *our liturgical responses*, made the people take so prominent a part in the service, they at once made cathedral architecture a thing of curiosity, but not of use; and if not of use, not of beauty either: for the true principles of art, science, and religion, are indissolubly connected, meeting, as they must meet, together in the mind of God. Should, then, any one say that he can feel no comfort in an edifice which admits not of Gothic decorations, and *has galleries "above the altar,"* we not only refer to that upper chamber in which the Lord's Supper was ordained, or that in which St. Paul preached; but we affirm that a dove, dressed with a peacock's tail-feathers, would be as pleasing a spectacle to pure reason as the edifice he admires. Amongst men of the finest genius we have strong authorities on our side: Cicero (De Off.) blames Pericles for his expensive propylæa; Winckelman dwells upon the evils of a merely imitative spirit amongst artists; Hope longs for an architecture "in harmony with our climate, institutions, and ha-

bits;" and Cockerell has lately said "architectural solecisms (inapt imitations,) derogate from the dignity of the art, and convert into a theatrical or romantic dream that which should embody sound sense and rational invention." These matters are, indeed, minor ones, abstractedly, but must be scrutinized, when much is made of them. For not only do these erroneous principles produce many of those inconvenient places of worship, like Saul's armour on David, impeding the Christianity which cannot "go with them;" but they also divert men's minds from the more important means of beating up the retreats of vice and wretchedness, and calling the stray sheep into the fold. Thus, in four new churches, built to accommodate nearly five thousand persons, on a careful inspection lately made, it was found that the morning and evening attendants, *added together*, did not exceed one thousand. One word more. The idea of a "paternal home" may be judged to be best exemplified in Roman Catholic churches as to this great point, viz. that the rich and poor, and even slaves (eye-witnesses have testified this to us of New Orleans) there meet upon a level. But does not this arise from the tendency to dramatic effect, and priestly exaltation, which is the soul of the system? The *abolition* of slavery will never be forwarded by Popery; the direct efforts and indirect influence of the true, spiritual church must achieve it.

P. 151, l. 19. *Desolating tempest.*—

A Christian cannot have the least sympathy with the unconscious agents, whom God uses in his retributive acts; for *he* is an ameliorator, not a selfish destroyer. Yet *must* a Christian always maintain, that national retributions are most likely to be avoided, when national faults are most deeply felt. Look towards Ireland: when may *he* hope that it will cease to vex England? Just when the latter, speaking generally, feels that it has *thrice* greatly wronged the former; by *conquering* it, by *forcing* popery upon it, and by *denying* it the Bible in its own tongue.

P. 189, l. 17. *The farthest limits of the Roman empire.*—The most eloquent passage in Gildas relates to this persecution: “*Permansere tunc quantæ fugæ, quantæ strages, quantæ diversarum mortium pænæ, quantæ religionis apostatarum ruinæ, quantæ glorióssimorum martyrum coronæ.*” (Hist. Gil. 9.) It appears, indeed, that the early Irish church owed much of its purity and prosperity to the infusion of zeal by those who found in Ireland a refuge from Diocletian’s madness.

P. 190, l. 18. *Other circumstances concurred.*—It would be interesting to trace not only the growth of Romanism, but of the Virgin-worship within it. For this, increasing from the 6th century, has now become its charm and soul. Wherever Romanism is now effective, the Virgin is the actual object of adoration; the Saviour is *her infant*; the Saints and

Angels *her ministers*; the cathedral *her earthly palace*, frequently surrounded by shops of false flowers and trinkets to decorate *her altars*. True faith is exercised and occupied upon the *divine Person* of Christ; false faith rests either upon *things*, as the elements in the sacraments, or upon *created persons*, as the Saints and the Virgin.

P. 194, l. 6. *The believing military*.—

It is to be noted that God did not employ the Israelites against the *Egyptians and Babylonians*, as against the Canaanites. To have done so would have made an opening for personal animosity, *the former* having been personal oppressors of the Israelites. The case is the same with the Romans.

P. 203, l. 10. *Slaves*.—Blair, in his interesting work on ancient slavery, shews that, in the time of our Lord, the evils of slavery were less in Judea than in any other parts of the Roman empire.

P. 209, l. 10. *The levity of the great poets of mythology*.—This levity is occasionally found in all the poets; but it is most striking in Ovid. Indeed Ovid, in his *Fasti*, seems to find pleasure in the religion of his country principally, because it is a "*fabula plena joci*."

P. 210, l. 1. *Controversy within it*.—

Admitted be all the hierarchical and superstitious tendencies of Augustin, all the errors of the Reformers, all the violence and fanaticism of the Puritans, all the

false excitements of the first Methodists, yet, undoubtedly, were these controversialists the pioneers of the church in its onward march. Not only so, but discussions, serious, gentle, and patient, amongst pious men, are amongst the means by which "the jewels" spoken of in Malachi prepare each other for the crown. Speaking here concerning the controversies of the church, we add a remark suggested by a survey of them. It is this, the church advances in knowledge in two ways, or lines, at once, the first relating to the *contents*, the second to the *limits* of revelation. And the second is scarcely less important than the first, just as in geographical discoveries a delineation of *coasts* is a most valuable adjunct to a description of *interiors*. This will be seen by all, who remember the awful disquisitions on the *Λογος* made of old not only by heretics, but by men, like Tertullian, whose *hearts* were probably right. (T. adv. Pr. vii.)

P. 210, l. 5. *Scepticism without it.*—

A curious history might be written of the good service which has been indirectly done to Christianity by its fiercest foes. The earlier sceptics are invaluable as witnesses to facts; the later have been the means of bright and precious things being brought to light. "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth."



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THE REST OF MAN

IN

THE REST OF GOD.

